



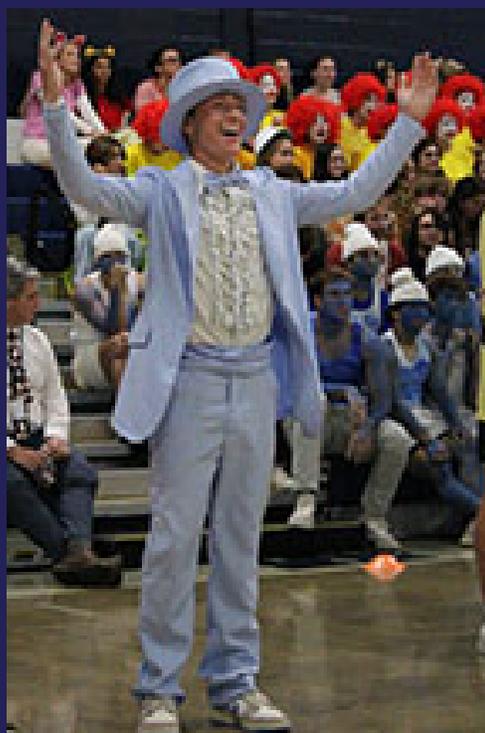
Manasquan High School

# The Blue & Gray

## Surf Team: Champs Again!



## Halloween Fun Returns to MHS



**Fall 2025  
in this issue...**

IB Comes to MHS  
Drama Club Fall Play  
Hispanic Heritage Night

Girls Tennis Wins  
Shore Conference  
Championship!  
and so much more!



The Blue & Gray  
Manasquan H.S.  
2025-2026  
Issue One

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# Fun unfolds at MHS Fall Play

By: Sydney Lynch



Above: Miss Patterson (front right) assigns daily chores to students Susan, Ziva, Aiden, Frankie, and Reggie

The stage has been set for Manasquan High School's fall play.

This year's fall play was "The Exceptional Childhood Center," a single act play performed on October 24<sup>th</sup> and October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the Jack Nicholson Theatre.

This play is a satire about a competitive "Ivy League" preschool, where Reggie Watson (played by Griffin Tomney) was recently accepted into and believes he's set for life. However, disaster strikes, and Reggie and his classmates must deal with the consequences of his mistake while also discovering things about themselves and learning lessons more valuable than the school could ever teach them.

"Even though it's obviously a satirical comedy, it touches on topics people of any age can relate to," said Ally McCoy, a senior here at MHS who plays the role of Ziva Collins in the play. "Even though most of the characters are 4 to 6 years

old." Along with Reggie, four other students attend The Exceptional Childhood Center. Susan Crawford (played by Jane Marks), an overachieving golden child who is always stressed about her future, Ziva Collins (played by Ally McCoy), a creepy, antisocial girl who's fascinated by anything morbid, Aiden Samuels (played by Jack Nicolay), a confident six-year-old who was held back for two years due to his emotional problems, and Frankie Samuels (played by Josh Johnson), Aiden's younger, hyperactive brother who looks up to him greatly. Their cheerful teacher Ms. Patterson (played by Maeve Korth) expects nothing but the best from "her scholars" when it comes to their assigned chores and their behavior.

All actors performed their roles amazingly, showcasing each character's personality

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# A New Way of Learning

## MHS Launches IB Program for Interested Students

By: Amelia Steger

With her Longchamp thrown over her shoulder, junior, and IB student Mei Lian Lee walks into school bright and early as so many do. She heads right up to her classroom and the second she steps through the door; she feels a sense of serenity and comfort seeing the same faces



Pictured Above: Junior Mei Lian Lee, a member of MHS's first IB class

she works with all day looking back at her.

This year Manasquan High School has begun offering the International Baccalaureate Program to students. The International Baccalaureate Program, otherwise known as IB, is made to prepare students for not only college but for the world by taking a wider view on learning.

"IB is a program of study that focuses on developing student skills that extend far beyond the subject content," said IB English teacher Mrs. Hillman. "Our goal is to support students in their growth as learners, researchers, inquirers, communicators, and global citizens."

Students in IB spend all day with the same classmates, which

helps them to connect and learn together. Not only do classmates connect but so do subjects. With IB, each lesson, no matter if it's Math or English, come together and relate to each other and the real world.

IB didn't come to Manasquan overnight, in fact it's taken several years to get the program at MHS started. Administration has gone to countless meetings and class sit ins to learn everything they needed to know before bringing IB to Manasquan.

After learning about IB, administration realized they needed someone to be their IB coordinator, and after attending Shore Regional High School's IB classes, Dr. Onorato knew this spot was meant for her. In 2023, Dr. Onorato was hired as DP coordinator for IB and immediately went to professional development training for a year.

It took another year until Manasquan was finally ready to begin their journey with IB. Now it's here, and here to stay.

You might be wondering, what's so different about IB, can't I just take an honors or AP class? The answer is, yes you can, but IB is completely different.

IB is a type of learning that pushes students to use critical thinking skills, and the program relies heavily on writing. Almost every test and quiz is all written and there is little to none multiple choice questions. Yes, even the math tests have writing based questions.

As said before, IB also prepares the students for conquering college and the world. Like AP classes, students have many chances to earn college credits, including a final test.

IB is a two-year program, and during these two years students are writing a 4,000-word research paper on a topic of their choice. They also must work together on a Creativity, Activity, and Service project, which teaches the students teamwork on a whole new level.

"What's unique is that you're doing it in Manasquan High School with so many mentors and people looking after you and guiding you," replied Dr. Onorato when asked the benefits of IB in relation to their 4,000-word paper. "Then when you get to college and you're asked to do that in whatever subject area, you already know how to do it and feel much more confident."

Dr. Onorato was not wrong when saying IB students have

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Pictured Above: IB Coordinator, Dr. Onorato

# Excitement and Opportunity Welcome MHS Freshmen

By: Allison McCoy

Manasquan High School students and faculty are excited for the 2025-2026 school year, but no one is more excited than the freshmen—who are starting their first year of high school.

On Wednesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Manasquan High School welcomed the class of 2029 to campus to start the new school year. There, they signed up for clubs, explored the school, and met their fellow freshmen.

This year's freshmen are jumping headfirst into the opportunities that MHS has to offer. From Student Council to Warrior Wednesdays, MHS's class of 2029 have shown the most enthusiasm to participate.

On the first Warrior Wednesday of the year, the freshmen were eager to join the fun.

"The freshmen were the



Above: Students play lunch games at the first Warrior Wednesday of the year.

first group," said Dr. Onorato, the freshmen English teacher. "To have all eight students up there ready to play."

For many 9th graders, the transition from middle school to high school can be intimidating - but the class of 2029 seems ready for the challenge. Their excitement is already making an impression on both teachers and upperclassmen.

When describing the transition from middle school to high school, freshman Lamees Elabasy said it's "overwhelming," adding "I've met a lot of new people, and it's met my expectations."

Another freshman, Kaylin Paseler, said that high school "has definitely surpassed my expectations." Kaylin later added "I am really liking history and painting - only because of Mr. Van Pelt."

Dr. Onorato noted that the class of 2029's curiosity and willingness to get involved stands out from previous years, making them well equipped to take on whatever high school has



Above: MHS Cheer welcomes the class of 2029.

to offer.

Participation in clubs and school events has been strong so far, with many freshmen signing up for a variety of sports teams, student government, and arts programs. Teachers say this early involvement could benefit students greatly in the long run.

As the school year goes on, MHS looks forward to watching the class of 2029 grow into confident and active members of the Warrior community. Their enthusiasm has already brought fresh energy to the halls - and it's the first few weeks are any indication, the newest Warriors are ready to make their mark.

# Entering the 2026 School Year

By: Jane Marks

Say goodbye to summer beach days and hello to Warrior Wednesdays!

On September 4th, Manasquan High School reopened its doors and welcomed back a group of staff and students eager to kick-start the school year. Coming back to school is always a significant adjustment for all, but the MHS community has a lot to look forward to in the 2025-2026 school year—as well as some new policies to spark debate about.

MHS Principal Dr. Kukoda has been especially excited to return for his second year and continue working toward creating a safe and comfortable school environment for everyone on campus.

"Each class is always different," he said. "And I'm trying to take the melting-pot approach to make sure everyone feels comfortable immediately."

Although only two years into his time as principal of MHS, Dr. Kukoda has made a lasting mark on student tradition through his coining of the phrase "Go Squan!"

When asked if he recognized the impact it had on the student body, Dr. Kukoda re-

sponded: "I'd be lying if I said I hoped it got to this point, but I definitely believe in rallying cries."

Having a sense of community is important, and MHS values conducting fun school-wide events that help bring everyone together. Last year, MHS students took part in



Above: The front entrance of Manasquan High School

various festivities such as the first Lip Dub, Squan-a-Thon, and Homecoming—to name a few.

"I'm excited to see what year two of the Lip Dub is going to bring," said senior Class Advisor and freshman English teacher Dr. Onorato.

In addition to the staff, many students are also excited for the festivities planned later this year, like seniors Maeve Korth and Ciara Dunne, who are looking forward to the annual Powder Puff game.

However, plenty of buzz has gone around among students over the implementation of the new no-AirPod rule, which prohibits them from wearing earbuds in school. Some students have felt indifferent to the rule, while others feel strongly against it.

"I don't love it. I'm the type of person who likes to listen to music while I work, so it's a bit of an adjustment," said Maeve. "But I get why it's there."

Dr. Kukoda commented on the reception of this controversial rule, saying "I'm not deterred by some of the criticisms of this."

Although the rule has the goal of keeping students present in the moment—and away from technolo-

gy—the main priority is safety.

"If there was ever an emergency," said Dr. Kukoda. "Everyone's eyes and ears have to be locked in and not buried in their AirPods."

It is an exciting new year at MHS. With many festivities planned, a fresh class of students, and controversies on the rise, students and staff alike will continue working together to make this year one of the best.



## Hispanic Heritage Month Brings Culture and Community to MHS

By: Jessica Sanchez - Garcia

The halls of Manasquan High School were filled with music, color, and the aroma of traditional foods during this year's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration held on October 8<sup>th</sup>. Students, staff, and families gathered to honor the diverse cultures and traditions of Hispanic and Latin American communities through dance, music, and food.

The annual event, now in its ninth year, has become a beloved tradition at MHS. It first began when Mrs. Rice, an ESL teacher at Manasquan Elementary School wanted to create a celebration where her students could express and share their culture. The event has since grown into a schoolwide collaboration led by Mrs. Mulroy, who has organized it for the past five years.

According to Mrs. Mulroy, a Guidance Counselor at MHS, the planning

process starts at the end of each school year, usually in June, to ensure every detail, from performances to food, is ready for the fall celebration. "It takes a lot of teamwork and passion to make this happen," she said. "But seeing the joy and pride on students' faces makes it all worth it."

The event featured a wide range of performances, from traditional folklorico dances to musical numbers by students. Two parent groups performed folk-

**Senior Kareem Herrera proudly excited to play for everyone!**



lorico dances, representing Veracruz and Oaxaca, Mexico. Seniors Emily Heredia and Dahana Guzman Cruz choreographed student dances, while senior Kareem Herrera performed a guitar piece that highlighted his cultural roots.

The MHS Band also contributed with a spirited song that brought the crowd to its feet.

"I think celebrating our culture at school is important because it gives us a sense of representation and to know



*A moment of community, culture, and delicious food!*

we exist – because we do contribute in good ways to society," Herrera said. He added that he hopes more students will join next year.

Beyond the performances, attendees enjoyed a variety of traditional dishes, including Spanish rice, tacos dorados, tamales, empanadas, and tinga. Local restaurant "La Cocinita" of Manasquan sponsored the event by providing much of the food.

Art teacher Mrs. Pagan, chorus teacher Mrs. Schil-



## MHS Teacher Feature Mrs. Heeter!

By: Blake Daniel

She started out as a substitute for Mr. Harvey, now she's a fan-favorite English Teacher.

English teacher and Senior Class Advisor Meredith Heeter started in Manasquan hot off the heels of her college graduation in May 2001, working as a substitute for Mr. Harvey. Today, she's a senior Class Advisor, and an integral part of MHS's English department.

"I am so fortunate that my entire teaching career has been here in Manasquan," said Mrs. Heeter. "Every day I go to work, and it feels like I get to work with some of my closest friends."

In the classroom, Mrs. Heeter has mostly enjoyed teaching *Lord of the Flies* for its relatable themes and interesting symbolism. Though currently not readint that novel just yet, Mrs. Heeter has always been very passionate about everything she teaches, from Ancient Greek myths to more modern stories.

English Teacher, Improv Club and Ping-Pong Club advisor Harry Harvey commended Mrs. Heeter

for her work ethic, enthusiasm and passion in the classroom, both towards her work and her students.

Mr Harvey said "Through the years, she's been a great teacher, a great colleague, and a great friend."

Mrs. Heeter's room also looks great as well, the walls are covered in lots of decorations and recent student's projects.

Alongside Dr. Onorato, Mrs.

Heeter is also one of the senior Class Advisors. On top of her hard work in and out of the classroom, Mrs. Heeter has helped to organize fundraisers, events and other fun things for all the seniors! As a senior myself, I'm very appreciative for what both Mrs. Heeter and Dr. Onorato have done, and what they'll be doing for the senior class.

For her passionate work as an English teacher, her work as a senior class advisor, and for the enthusiasm she's brought into the school every day, we say "Thank You Mrs. Heeter!"



*Mrs Heeter in the Classroom!*

## Hispanic Heritage Night

*continued from previous page*

le, and the MHS PTO all played key roles in organizing the evening. Five girls: Lizzet Cordero, Sarah Gonzalez, Ana Angel, Ayelen Guzman, and Camilla, came dressed up in their quinceñera dresses to show representation for that cultural tradition.

"It is important to feel prideful and showcase the beauty of the Hispanic Culture," said Mrs. Mulroy. "There are so many people joyfully dancing and showing their food – it's wonderful to see everyone expressing themselves and showing their culture."

The celebration once again reminded students and staff that MHS thrives on diver-



*Parent groups and kids celebrating the rythm, color, and spirit of Hispanic culture!*

sity, creativity, and community spirit, which are values that make the school stronger every year.

# Meet Mr. Curtis... the newest edition to the Science department at MHS

By Charlotte Leible

Their least favorite subject is science...but their favorite teacher is a science teacher?!

Thirty-two-year-old Mr. Curtis has just started teaching here at Manasquan High School this year. This is his third-year teaching physics coming from teaching for 2 years at Long Branch. Before that he went to college at West Chester University, where he studied physics and majored in education. Moving from teaching at Long Branch to here at MHS has been a big change. For the better...obviously!

Mr. Curtis is very nice and

Pictured below: two of Mr. Curtis's students, juniors Gabby Restivo and Michaela Kelly



also very interesting. As a kid he grew up playing hockey and ran track and cross country. When he got older, he lived in Asia for 4 years!

Gabby Restivo who is a junior in Mr. Curtis's period 8 class said, "Physics is one of the more challenging science classes I've taken, but my teacher makes it easier." She's never really liked science but claims that with Mr. Curtis "this year is gonna be different!"

Physics is an intimidating class. It is a hard class that is very math orientated. It's a very important class in your high school career. Physics is mostly taught to juniors who are 16 and 17 just starting to drive. Mr. Curtis pointed out how it is a very useful class with a lot of real-world examples...driving being one of them. This class can help them understand the science behind why they wear a seatbelt and why they don't go 100 mph down the road.

Another junior in Mr. Curtis's period 8 class is Michaela Kelly. "My favorite lab that we did so far was the acceleration lab!" she said. Michaela thinks Mr. Curtis is super nice and his class is not bad at all so far!



Pictured above: Mr. Curtis

Mr. Curtis strongly believes that his students should always try to put in effort even if they don't exactly love his class. His favorite part of teaching is meeting new people constantly. He loves helping his students find who they truly are and what they want to do. As a teacher he does not like giving too much homework. If he had to teach a different subject it would be gym!

"He's wonderful"- said Mr. Petriella who teaches bio and chem next door!

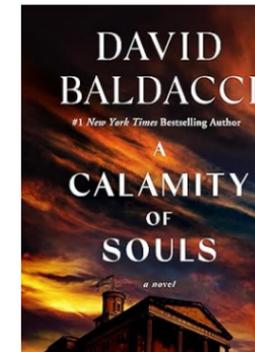
# Come Read a Book with Mrs. Hillman!

By: Blake Daniel

It's that time again, and you know what that means! It's time for the MHS Book Club

As usual, the Book Club has been very open to book suggestions, and this time around they decided to read *A Calamity of Souls* by David Baldacci for their first book of the year.

Similar to the bestselling novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Calamity of Souls* takes place in the South around the era of the civil rights movement, where a pair of lawyers are in a fight to save a black man from being wrongfully executed for murder. The book is a fictional (yet simultaneously, not so fictional) tale of racial tensions, and the fight for true justice.



Mrs. Hillman is very excited to share this story with those willing to read it with her. The Book Club operates off a very flexible schedule, and (once the current book is complete, of course) Mrs. Hillman is very open to suggestions for other books.

However, even with these factors it's still quite hard to get people in the door.

"There's a quote by John Green that says, 'Reading forces you to be quiet in a world that no longer makes place for that,' and that's why I think the book club is so important," said Mrs. Hillman. She continues, saying "It's encouraging and inspiring young teenagers to carve out moments and opportunities for them to expand their knowledge of the world."

In a world and school environment where things can go so quickly, the book club is an opportunity for students to sit down, take a breather, and just talk about a good book.

So please, take some time to do a bit of reading outside of the classroom, and pick up a good book with Mrs. Hillman.



## New IB Program

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the best mentors here at MHS; the IB teachers are committed to their students and the subjects they are teaching.

The IB teachers include Mr. Shibla who teaches Theory of Knowledge, Mrs. Hillman who teaches IB English, Mrs. Anderson who teaches IB Spanish, Mr. Minnuto-li who teaches IB Math, Mrs. Virok who teaches IB History, Mr. Savacool who teaches IB Psychology, and Mr. Waznesky who teaches IB Environmental Science. Mrs. Hoeler and Mrs. Fenlon help students with their two-year projects as well.

Every teacher equally

works just as hard as the other to teach the IB students everything they can. This is the first time any of them have taught in this style, yet they all make it look like they've been teaching

this way for years.

IB may be in its first year here at MHS, but the program is about preparing these students for years of their lives. It's going to teach them skills and lessons that they will use today, tomorrow, and every day after.

"I'd say people who like writing or deep thinking would really like it, but I think it would benefit anyone who wants to try it and really help them grow as students," said Mei after being asked if she would recommend IB to other students.



Pictured Above: Mr. Wasnesky teaching the IB class

# Health Careers Academy Helps Save Lives

By: Cameron McLaughlin

The sound of friendly chatter filled the Manasquan High School gym on Friday October 24th, as students, staff, and community members rolled up their sleeves to save lives.

For the 16th time, Manasquan High School is hosting their blood drive, run by the school's Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) club and Mrs. Kozic, who has been organizing the event for quite some time.

Held twice a year, the blood drive has become important for the community. In total around 90 donors were expected to participate. While many students gave blood, Mrs. Kozic said that most of the donors actually came from the helpful community that included parents and even past students.

"At our blood drive, more community members donated and even a Manasquan High School alumni," stated Mrs.

Kozic, teacher and advisor of the Academy of Health Careers and the organizer for the blood drive.

The event was promoted through QR codes, announcements, and posts on the Health-care Academy's Instagram. Students also spread the word on social media, to reach more friends and family.

While it might not seem like it, organizing a blood drive doesn't come without challenges. Despite her diligence, Mrs. Kozic faced a couple issues with "...youngness in the junior class for the fall blood drive and them getting older for the spring blood drive" she explained. "Finding space in school is also a huge challenge."

Among the donors, senior Sofia Arbeit, an employee at Spring Lake's Driftwood Coffee was giving blood for the first time. "I want to work in the healthcare field when I'm older so why not start saving lives now?" Sofia exclaims. She admitted to feeling a little nervous



Above: Senior Charlotte Michko and junior Abby Zirolu helped to organize the blood drive

before, but she ended up satisfied. "Before, I felt energized and ready. During, I felt great and supported by the workers. Now, I feel good, no complaints! Just drinking cranberry juice and eating," she laughed.

While some were donating, others were volunteering. National Honor's Society member and senior Charlotte Michko, who has helped with the drive since her sophomore year, was responsible for checking in donors and managing appointments. "I've had such a great time volunteering," she said. "Getting to help the community and hang out with Mrs. Kozic makes it so much fun."

As the day wrapped up, the sense of accomplishment was there. The Manasquan High School blood drive isn't just a school event; it's a reminder of how powerful a community and a school can be when they come together to save lives.

Left: Seniors Liam Byrne and Miles Kline charging up after donating their blood



# Scary Good Fun at the National Honor Society Trunk or Treat



Above: NHS members posing with their movie-themed car.

By: Allison McCoy

Scary Good Fun at the National Honor Society Trunk or Treat

On Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Manasquan High School's National Honor Society transformed the school's horseshoe driveway into a Halloween celebration, welcoming families, teachers, and children from the community for its annual Trunk or Treat event.

The event, organized and hosted by MHS NHS members, featured decorated car trunks, students in creative costumes, and a

Below: NHS members who attended the Trunk or Treat event.



community-focused atmosphere. Each participating student turned their car into a themed display – from spooky scenes to movie inspired setups – while handing out candy to excited

trick-or-treaters.

This Trunk or Treat has become a highlight of the fall season for both NHS members and the families who attend. Ms. McHugh, the NHS leader at Manasquan High School reported that parents said, "It was such and enjoyable experience and they loved the different themes of the cars."

The horse-shoe, located right in front of the

school's main entrance, was the perfect setting for families to safely walk from trunk to trunk, collecting candy while admiring the students' designs. Many younger children arrived in costume alongside their parents, enjoying a chance to celebrate Halloween early in a fun and welcoming environment.

For NHS members, the event was about more than just Halloween fun. It was an opportunity to engage with the community and promote one of the Societies core values – service. Allison McCoy, an NHS member



Above: Molly Nixon, Maeve Korth, and Allison McCoy posed with their ladybug car.

at Manasquan said "The biggest reason that I joined NHS was to serve others." Another NHS participant added, "I think it's a really good thing for the community to bond together and have some fun."

As the day came to a close, both participants and visitors left with smiles - and plenty of candy. The event served as a reminder of how MHS students continue to strengthen their ties with the community through creativity, teamwork, and service.

With another successful trunk or treat

in the books, the MHS NHS hopes to continue making the event an annual tradition that families can look forward to participating in, each October.

# Manasquan Honors Fallen Heros at Annual NJ Run for the Fallen

By: Jane Marks

Manasquan High School has a rich and diverse collection of alumni. The Warrior spirit runs strongly in each and every student, motivating those at MHS to fight for what is right—some even going as far as laying down their lives for what they believe in.

The NJ Run for the Fallen is an annual run spanning Cape May to Holmdel, over 225 miles, done in memory of various New Jersey heroes who valiantly died protecting the rights of all Americans.



Above: Runners approach Ron's milemark. Below: Mrs. Kubrik hugs one of the runners.



Their route through the state includes a stop here at MHS, where participants honor our very own Ronald A. Kubik—a class of 2006 graduate and US Army Ranger who laid down his life in 2010. This heroic act saved the lives of his five fellow rangers, five Afghan soldiers, and 19 Afghani women and children.

Many students and teachers were present to show support for the runners and their cause, and the MHS band played the and food and drink was offered for the early risers.

"It was a lovely day, and a good amount of folks show up, and the runners seemed thankful," reported Mr. Harvey, who taught Ron and has attended the Run for the Fallen every year since they started coming to MHS.

Senior Maeve Korth was also present at the event as a member of the band. "It makes me feel patriotic seeing the way people honor all the fallen and seeing people who got up so early to do this run," she said.

"I liked to be at the event to show my support for the people who have lost someone," said Ally McCoy, another senior volunteer. "And also, to show my support for the military itself."

However, this run offers more than important opportunities for student



Above Top: Student volunteers pose with Mr. Harvey. Above: The MHS band plays to cheer the runners on

involvement and support for the military—it fosters support for the families of those who have lost their loved ones.

"Every year Mrs. Kubik gives everyone in the band a hug and you can tell how much they just appreciate it and how important this is to so many people" said Maeve.

"I think it really helps his mom deal with his passing and sacrifice, and at the same time, it helps everyone remember it," said Mr. Harvey. "Living in a country like ours where you have a lot of freedom... there are many people who make big sacrifices so we can have a country like that—which is an important reminder."

# Caught Living Like a Warrior

By: Cait Young

The "Caught Living Like a Warrior" campaign that Dr. Kukoda started last year, recognizing students who demonstrate the character of Manasquan High School. Each month students showing different sides of their admirable character are honored by the school.

In the month of September, the theme was authenticity. Authenticity is about being true to yourself and other people. It is important to embrace your individuality, sharing your voice honestly, and staying aligned with your values even in the face of challenges. Warriors lead with their genuine selves, inspiring trust and connection.

It was meant to catch students in the act of kindness and the



Above: September's "Authenticity" honorees

act of something they're passionate about. It's nice to recognize somebody that's maybe not an athlete or a star scholar, but it's truly just stepping out of their way to help somebody out.

"We don't do enough things that really recognizes everybody in the building," said Mrs. Winter.

Students can achieve this honor by simply doing good things for others, like going through the halls and seeing someone that needs help picking

up a book or someone who isn't capable of opening a door on their own. Being someone that goes above and beyond with just the daily routine of life.

The students who were elected for showing Authenticity in the month of September were Lexi Drent, Sophia Covert, Jake Romano, Abigail Liroli, Jack Poland, John Jake, Jack O'Reilly, Reagan Prime, Juliana Casale, Finley O'Neill, Dahana Guzman Cruz, Georgia Kenny, Jane Marks and Nicole Mendoza.

From this award, you can achieve recognition and thanks by Dr. Kukoda. Senior Jane Marks was nominated by Mr. Glenn for being a good fit for authenticity. She is open to inspiring other people by being herself and making other people comfortable by using authenticity. Nicole Mendoza was nominated by Ms. Anderson for helping a girl who was in the middle of the street. She wants to inspire people to be kind and help people when they need it. At Manasquan High School, we believe it is important to show people kindness whoever they are.



October 2025

CAUGHT...LIVING LIKE A WARRIOR

# Student Council is Stepping Up

By: Stella Brady

The new school year is on track to be the most spirited yet. From planning homecoming to launching new mentorship programs, student council members are working to create a better community for all grade levels.

According to senior class president Elle Vitanzo, the council has “a lot planned to bring everyone together.”

The group organizes school events like dances, pep rallies, and spirit days. Their main goal this year is to increase school spirit and student involvement.

“We plan a lot of the events for our school like dances, homecoming events, and gatherings in general,” Elle said. “We’re also starting

a new club called Peer Mentorship so seniors can meet freshmen throughout the year and give them advice.”

Elle said she also hopes to make communication stronger within the student body.

“We have group chats, and I’m getting messages out to people more efficiently than last year,” she said. “This way people know when spirit days are, how to dress up, and where to go.”

Moreover, Olivia Carlile, one of twelve freshman representatives on Student Council, said she joined Student Council to make sure every student has a voice.

“I wanted to represent the freshmen and make sure everyone’s voices are heard,” Olivia said.

She went on to elaborate her main goal, which is “to make sure that everyone has fun and to get events going for the school.”

In addition, Mrs. Koenig, MHS business teacher who helps to run Student Council, had a lot to say.

“My favorite part of Student Council is all of the activities that bring the students together,” she said.

Mrs. Koenig explained that there are many events coming up. Some of the upcoming events Mrs. Koenig listed consist of Warrior Wednesday, the Halloween



Above: Senior Elle Vitanzo, Student Council president

costume contest, the Cornhole Tournament on 11/9, and the Wizards vs. Manasquan and Brielle Staff on 11/20.

Student Council members are already hard at work preparing for homecoming, one of the biggest events of the fall.

Olivia said, “the most important upcoming event for Student Council is definitely the homecoming dance.”

According to Elle, it is her hope that “everyone dresses up for Halloween, goes to all of the football games, and genuinely wants to be there.” She believes that when students participate, “it makes the school such a better environment.”

With participation in student council from freshman all the way up to seniors, it is clear that the club will have an immensely successful year.

Above: Freshman Olivia Carlile, Student Council Representative



# MHS Welcomes New English Teacher, Mr. Rios

By: Jazmin Rodriguez

their personal lives.

MHS has hired a new staff member into the building

Leonardo Rios was hired as a long term substitute teacher as a replacement for Mrs. Choma, who had a baby over the summer and will be coming back in December.

Mr. Rios is quickly making his mark due to his infectious passion for teaching English.

At 29, Rios brings fresh enthusiasm, emphasizing the importance of creativity in the classroom. He explains that what excites him

At left: Mr. Rios preps at his desk before class



most about teaching English is witnessing students’ unique interpretations of literature, allowing them to connect it to

“Seeing kids apply literature to their own lives and make it their own is really interesting,” he enthuses.

His philosophy reflects his commitment to nurturing a rich learning environment. Although this is his first year as a formal educator, his background from Thomas River South High School has equipped him with the tools needed to inspire a new generation.

Mr. Rios has showed how passionate he is about students’ education.

“My favorite part about teaching English is seeing how creative kids can get with it,” Mr. Rios said “English isn’t just about right or wrong, it’s a lot about interpretation and how you kind of connect to the literature so seeing kids are able to take this literature and apply it to their own lives is really interesting.”

Mr. Rios finished his student teaching at Toms River South High School and now MHS is his first full time job.

Unfortunately, when Mrs Choma comes back, Mr. Rios will need to find a new job. But his students have really liked him, and even started a petition to keep him.

## Fall Play

continued from page 2

through their lines and actions on stage. “I personally have a lot of fun with her,” said Jane, the actor for Susan Crawford. I definitely relate to a lot of her stresses as a senior right now going into college.”

Even when an unexpected problem occurred during the show on Saturday, when class hamster “Fluffles” got stuck in the classroom carpet upon trying to make his escape, the actors were able to improv and make the audience laugh even harder at the unexpected, but hilarious moment.

The audience loved the creative and eye-catching set for the play. Colorful children’s toys and stuffed animals decorated the stage neatly, and (thanks to Aiden), were thrown around and destroyed later on. A bookshelf filled with classic children’s stories was also part of the set, and just like the stuffed animals, were also tossed onto the ground.

Saturday night was quite popular with the audience. As said before, with some improv and talented acting, the Drama Club was able to make the audience laugh and have a great time watching the story and destruction unfold.

Ms. Schille, Manasquan High School’s choir teacher and co-director of the play, and Mr. Harvey, English teacher and assistant director of the play, were the ones who chose The Exceptional Childhood Center as this year’s fall play.

“We thought it was the most funny option,” said Ms. Schille, and based off the audience’s reaction, they were definitely right!

Later on in the school year, the Drama Club will be performing the musical Little Women, a musical based on the classic novel that follows four sisters who are trying to navigate the challenges of wartime and societal expectations while finding strength and support in each other.

Ziva Collins playing with her decapitated Barbie dolls



# Teamwork Without Limits: The Power of Unified Sports in Building Inclusive Communities

By: Nicole Mendoza

Unified Sports brings students together at Manasquan High School, giving everyone a chance to play, compete and build friendships through teamwork and inclusion. The program focuses on creating connections between students of all abilities both on and off the fields.

According to Unified Sports Advisor Ms. Walling, her role as supervisor is to promote inclusion and teamwork among students while planning, organizing, and running practices and games.

This year's Unified Sports lineup includes flag football, soccer, basketball, track and field, kickball, and even a bowling event. Ms. Walling said the program also offers fundraising opportunities that allow students to volunteer and get involved outside of sports.

Students say they joined for different reasons but shared the same excitement about being part of the team. Brendan Blair, a sophomore Unified Sports participant, said he joined because he liked playing football and it made him feel good. He explained that he learned important skills such as how to defend, where to go in line, and how to play as part of a team.

"When someone's defending you have to pass the ball to your teammates," Brendan explained. He added that he hoped Unified Sports would continue to grow by playing at a bigger field and eventually on turf.

Another student, Nick LaBollita,



Above: Participants in the unified sports program (from left to right) Nick Walsifer, Brendan Blair, Nick LaBollita, Michael Ricca, Shea Callahan

ta, said he joined Unified Sports because he loved playing sports and being with his friends. He explained that it gave him happiness and a sense of belonging. "I love sports and being with my best friends," he said.

Nick Walsifer, another participant, shared that his favorite part of Unified Sports was playing football and spending time with teammates. When asked what being part of Unified Sports meant to him, he said it was exciting and fun. "I like sports, I like to watch football," he said.

Nick also said he wanted to see the program grow by getting more students involved and joining the team in the future. "You should join because it's fun," he said.

Ms. Walling said the support from families, teachers, and

staff played a huge role in the success of the program. Families attended games to cheer on the athletes, while teachers promoted the program and recognized players during announcements and assemblies. "Families can show their support by attending games and or events to cheer on the athletes," Walling said.

Looking ahead, Ms. Walling said her goal is to expand Unified Sports so more students could participate and form friendships. "I would like to see our team size increase so more students can experience playing together and building friendships."

Unified Sports continued to show that teamwork, sportsmanship, and inclusion could bring students together in ways that went far beyond the playing field.

# SENIOR SHOUTOUT!

By: Olive O'Reilly

An outstanding friend, athlete, and student? What more could you ask for?

**Logan  
McCarthy!**

MHS senior Logan McCarthy plays a huge role in Manasquan High School's athletic department. Not only

is she a part of the tennis and basketball team, but she is also an enormous part of the Girls Lacrosse program. She has been on the Varsity Team for all four years of her High School career where she plays defense and midfield. She is a force on defense with a total of 131 ground balls in the past three years. Moreover, Logan will further her athletic and academic career playing at the University of Albany.



Pictured above: Logan stretching on the turf

She not only contributes to the athletic aspect of Manasquan High School, but she is also a social butterfly on and off the field. "I love all the sports teams and how connected we are," says Logan. "Our friendships really show in our overall team dynamic."

Whether it's getting coffee, going to the beach, or just chatting it up during practice, Logan loves spending time with her friends. She has found that the bonds she has built from her numerous school teams makes the school day something to look forward to.

"I love her view of everything. Her descriptions on everyday life make me very happy," states Elle Vitanzo, a close friend and teammate of Logan's as well as School President. "She is so fun to be around, and I am lucky to be her friend."



Picture at left: Fun-loving Logan with her pal Elle Vitanzo

# Finding Their Place: New Students Adjust to Life at MHS

By: Natalie Goble

Starting at a new school can be both exciting and nerve-wracking. At Manasquan High School, new students quickly learn they're joining more than just a school. They're becoming part of a special community. With just under 1,000 students, MHS offers a unique atmosphere, where teachers and students know each other personally. This environment helps new students feel supported, and find their footing quickly. From familiar faces in the hallways, to teachers who take time to connect, MHS makes it easier for students to find their place.

But how are new students adjusting, and what do they think

Senior Justice Morgan scoring a touchdown



so far? To find out, we spoke to two recent transfers about their experiences.

Senior Justice Morgan, who transferred from Brick Township, said he adjusted quickly. "It didn't take too long to figure things out," Morgan said. He quickly got involved by joining the football team, saying, "That was one of the first things I got into when I got here," he said. When asked if it helped smooth his transition, he said, "Yes, it gave me a way to meet a lot of people." When asked how fellow students have been helping his adjustment, he said, "Everyone's been welcoming. No complaints."

As for the hardest part so far? "Getting used to how the computer works."

Still, he says the best part of his move has been meeting people, and getting to know his classmates.

Valentina Hernandez, a freshman who transferred from Metuchen, New Jersey, is adjusting well to life at MHS. Starting high school is already a big step, but doing it in a completely new town brings its own set of challenges. Thankfully, she says the support at MHS has made the transition a lot easier.

"Everyone's been really welcoming," she shared. "I've already made a bunch of friends."

Valentina got involved early by joining Key Club and the cheer team. "I really enjoy



Freshman Valentina Hernandez

making friends with everyone, and I think cheer helped me transition more easily, because I already knew a bunch of girls before school started," she said. She admits the school's schedule and being in a new environment have still taken some getting used to. "I'm still getting to know people," she said, "and the class schedule is a bit difficult to keep up with." Despite some small challenges, she's excited about what's ahead. "I'm really looking forward to fun activities like homecoming, more cheer events, and Squan-A-Thon."

Both Justice and Valentina's experiences are examples of how Manasquan High School's close-knit community helps ease the transition for new students. While transferring comes with its challenges, having a strong school support system makes settling in a little easier. And, as the year continues, that support remains a constant reminder of what makes Manasquan's community truly special.

# The Harlem Wizards are Coming to Town!

By: Amelia Steger

Mark your calendars and take off work because the famous Harlem Wizards are coming to town!

On Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> in the Manasquan High School gymnasium, the Wizards will compete in a basketball game against local teachers. The event is set up by MHS Student Council and all money raised from the night will go to them.

The Harlem Wizards are a professional exhibition traveling basketball team made up of talented and athletic players. These players play to win but more than that, play to perform.

They often perform at school assemblies, charity causes, and fundraising events. The Student Council has worked hard and long to get the Wizards to MHS not just last year, but now this year too.

"The Harlem Wizards game is more than just a basketball show, it's an opportunity

for the community to come together, have a blast, and raise funds for MHS Student Council," said MHS teacher, and Harlem Wizards event planner Ms. Koenig.

Tickets go on sale on Friday October 24<sup>th</sup>, and they will range from \$25 to \$75. You aren't just paying for a basketball game though because throughout the whole night there will be many

the game last year.

As previously mentioned, you are not only paying to see the game, but for so much more. Once you enter the gym, you will be transported into a lively, lit up event full of cheers and laughter.

Some other things happening include pregame "Wiz Kids" warm-ups, comedy, and countless amounts of opportunities for audience participation.

If you think you've heard of this event before, you probably have since this isn't the first time the Wizards have come to MHS. Last year the Wizards came to Squan and it was a huge success. The night raised lots of money for Student Council and the energy in the gym was unmatched.

"Last year was our first year hosting the Wizards and it was a huge success!" said Ms. Koenig. "All the Class Advisors, Student Council Representatives, student coaches and referees got everyone involved to help make this event fun and memorable for all the families who attended."

If you wish you attended the Harlem Wizards event last year, then this is your sign to buy your tickets ASAP for this year. Don't wait or hesitate and enjoy a fun night out at MHS to see who will win, the famous Wizards or the Hometown Heroes.



Pictured Above: Harlem Wizards flyer

other fun and memorable moments to look forward to.

The main event is the big basketball competition which is teachers vs. the Wizards.

The teacher's team, otherwise known as the "Hometown Heroes" is made up of teachers and staff from both Manasquan and Brielle schools. So, if you're a student who wants to see their teachers get dunked on, this is the event to attend.

"It was cool seeing my teacher being humbled and getting dunked on. The atmosphere was wild!" said Manasquan Elementary School 7<sup>th</sup> grader Jack Fitzgerald who attended



Above: Harlem Wizards Players

# “The Summer I Turned Pretty”: Popular Show Captivating MHS Audiences This Season

By: Jessica Sanchez - Garcia



a tangled love triangle filled with heartbreak, family struggles, and self-discovery.

Senior Dahana Guzman Cruz did not hesitate when asked which brother she is rooting for. “Who would ever be Team Jeremiah?” she laughed. Dahana describes the show in just three words, chaotic, lovable, and interesting. She is firmly on Team Conrad believing “he deserves better – he’s more mature.” However, she also admits Belly’s back and forth between the brothers makes her character “too messy” at times.

Senior Emily Heredia agrees that the series is a rollercoaster. She sums up her main takeaway from the show by stating, “Always trust your heart and mind, don’t act on impulse.” While she leans toward Team Conrad, Emily acknowledges Jeremiah’s appeal as “more of a lover boy.”

*Below: Seniors Emily Heredia and Dahana Guzman Cruz are all in on Team Conrad; Below right: Senior Yaritza Reyes - Lopez is Team No One!*



It is not summer anymore, but for many students at Manasquan High School, The Summer I Turned Pretty is still one of the biggest topics of the season. The show is based on Jenny Hans novels, which continues to stir debates in the hallways over one question – Team Conrad or Team Jeremiah?

The show follows teenager Isabel “Belly” Conklin as she spends her summers at Cousins Beach with her mother’s (Laurel Conklin) childhood best friend (Susannah Fischer) and her two sons, Conrad and Jeremiah. What begins as a coming-of-age story quickly turns into

Her favorite part of the series is the emotional depth surrounding Susannah’s illness and her final moments with her sons. “It’s sad but really touching,” she said. Emily stated that she would recommend the show to her friends for its “plot twists and emotional turns,” even if she feels Belly’s character “changed a lot, and not necessarily in a good way.”

However, not everyone at MHS is caught up in the show’s charm. Senior Yaritza Reyes – Lopez holds on an opposing view, calling the series “overrated.”

“Why doesn’t she just not choose either? Like either pick one or pick neither – don’t play with their feelings,” She believes the show to be “very corny” and even added that many people “only like it because it’s trending,” Yaritza states.

Whether fans are swooning or rolling their eyes, The Summer I Turned Pretty has clearly made an impact at MHS. Between the romantic tension, dramatic twists and emotional storylines, students cannot seem to turn away from the screen – or stop choosing sides.

# The Blonde Shallot: New Food Option Opens in Sea Girt

By: Natalie Goble



*Some of The Blonde Shallot’s fresh food options*

There’s a new spot in town, and students are already talking about it.

The Blonde Shallot, a small local restaurant, opened its doors on Washington Avenue in Sea Girt this past May. With a unique name and healthy vibe, it’s becoming a favorite spot for people looking to grab something different from the usual fast food! Inside the restaurant, the shelves are lined with multiple different fresh-food options, all with a comfortable atmosphere.



*The Blonde Shallot’s Logo*

Unlike typical fast-food restaurants, The Blonde Shallot focuses on its Grab n’ Go Salads, Hot Soups, Grain Bowls, & Daily Specials. “I think it’s really good,” said Manasquan High School senior Claire Falkowski. “I like how there is fresh food prepared, and you can just walk in and get whatever. There’s also rarely a long line.”

The inspiration for the restaurant was sparked when owner

Jess Rogers moved from Manhattan to Little Silver. She was surprised by the lack of prepared food and takeout options around town.

“My husband and I moved to Little Silver after living in Manhattan for 10 years. When we arrived, I was surprised there were not more prepared foods and takeout options, and I envisioned what we know today as The Blonde Shallot to fill that void.”

Mrs. Kozic, the Coordinator of the Academy of Health Careers, praised The Blonde Shallot for its healthy options. “It is a gem for our community because it makes healthy eating accessible and enjoyable. Having a place that focuses on creative, nourishing meals gives people an option that supports both wellness and flavor—it’s not always easy to find that balance.”

Jess shared some challenges she faced since becoming a business owner, such as maintaining customer satisfaction while rotating the menu weekly in a small retail space. “I have learned to keep a percentage of the most popular items as weekly ‘basics’ that are always in stock.”

Claire was enthusiastic about her experience. When asked if she was satisfied with her meal, she said, “I had the vegetable lo mein and I was

very satisfied! It was so easy to get, and it was very good!”

When it comes to cost, Mrs. Kozic also believes The Blonde Shallot has a great value. “The portions are generous, the ingredients are top-quality, you can tell everything is made with care. When you’re getting food that’s both healthy and delicious, it feels like a great value for the price.”

To the students dreaming of starting their own business someday, Jess offers this advice: “Do not worry so much about the logistics. Just start working hard at what your passion is and stay consistent in that. Once you begin working very hard with all your passion in it, the path will become more obvious as you stay consistent!”

The Blonde Shallot may be small, but it’s making a name for itself around town. Whether you’re looking for a sit-down lunch or a grab-and-go meal, it’s becoming a favorite spot for locals, and it might just become yours too!

# Students and Staff Show Their Creative, and Spooky, Halloween Spirit at MHS

By: Cameron McLaughlin

On Friday October 31st, the day of Halloween, students and teachers showed off their creativity with their costumes in Manasquan High School. From the morning assembly to afternoon classes, the day was packed with ac-

girls," said Quinn Petrulla, a junior at Manasquan. "They were legit."

Another great and popular costume of the day was Liam Byrne, who dressed as business teacher Mr. Driscoll. "Liam's was my favorite. As soon as I saw him, I knew he was Mr. Driscoll. I just started laughing," Journalism teacher Mr. Mawn stated with laugh-

long-standing tradition here at Manasquan High School..." Mrs. Eldridge, the vice principal and creator of the Halloween games reveals.

Halloween at Manasquan

*Below: Various students in their costumes playing Pumpkin Snatch*



High School represents more than just costumes and candy. Mrs. Fenlon, an English teacher at the school said, "I always love the sense of community that's apparent throughout our district on this day. There's such a traditional and nostalgic atmosphere that repeats every year."

As school doors closed and people were clothed in their costumes for Halloween, one thing was clear about the holiday. Halloween at Manasquan High School remains a tradition important to staff and students and it will not be leaving anytime soon.



*Above: Liam Byrne representing Mr. Driscoll*



*Above: Dr. Kukoda dressed as Harry Potter for Halloween*

tivities and spooky spirit.

Principal Dr. Kukoda shared, "Manasquan High School celebrated Halloween with a day of activities that brought the community together in festive fashion. Students and staff participated in a costume parade, and we had games, contests, and classroom events added to the fun."

One of the favorite costumes came from multiple senior girls who all dressed up as Ronald McDonald and had everyone amused. "I liked the Ronald McDonald senior

ter.

During the morning assembly, students competed in games like *Brew HaHa*, *Broomstick Relay*, and *Pumpkin Snatch* and participated in costume contests for different categories.

"I thought this was a great year of celebrating Halloween. Many high schools don't give their students the opportunity to dress up and celebrate Halloween, but this is a

## SPOOKY DOORS OF MHS

SAY NO TO DRUGS!



RED RIBBON WEEK DOOR DECORATING CONTEST!





# MHS 2025 Spooktacular Celebration



# WARRIOR SPORTS

## Manasquan Surf Back on Top



*Pictured: Manasquan Surf Team pictured with their trophies after winning regionals*

On Sunday, October 19, the Manasquan Surf Team won the Northeast Regional Championship! The incredible achievement is the cherry on top to an already dominant season.

The team excelled in boys shortboard, girls shortboard and longboard. Senior Seton Iglay won the girls' individual state contest with freshman Laila Wanner finishing behind Seton in 2<sup>nd</sup>.

On the boys side, sophomore Finn Holloway, senior Henry Hall, and juniors James Brooks and Jake Miller all advanced to the semifinals. Jake even advanced to the finals in the boys shortboard and longboard.

Altogether, the team was able to rack up 137 total points, giving Squan their 10th title!

Surf team head coach Mr. Hoffman was very pleased and excited about the accomplishment. Mr. Hoffman told the Coast Star, "All team members performed so well and supported each other to make for a total team victory."



*Pictured: Jake Miller being lifted by his teammates after a nice performance*

By: Richie Conklin

The surfers were also happy with the performance. Juniors Quigley Cavallo and James Brooks had a very fun season.

Quigley explained, "Winning states was 100 percent my favorite moment of the season."

It was his first time winning a state title and he was very excited about the achievement. "It's a very good feeling right when you get that trophy," Quigley said.

James' favorite moment of the season was, "Winning states but mainly when we were calculating the points with the team and realizing we won."

It was also James' first year winning a state title. He added, "It's a good feeling knowing everyone on the team did their best and benefited to the win."

Both boys also have high hopes for a strong season next year and believe that they can pull off being back-to-back champs!

Manasquan is now back on top of the Shore, after two years finishing second. Before that they had won 10 championships in a row! The Manasquan Surf Team now look toward future state titles and hope that this victory restores their dominance in the surfing world!

## Girls Tennis Earns Historic Shore Conference Win

By: Kelsey Kalemba

Since the last time that the Manasquan Girls Tennis team won the Shore Conference tournament in 1996, there have been 5 new presidents, 7 summer Olympics, and 6 major social media platforms created.

This season, they ended their 29-year title drought in the Shore Conference Tournament with a win over Rumson Fair Haven.

To get to the finals, they beat number 1 seeded Colts Neck in the semifinals. Colts Neck was ranked number 7 in New Jersey, and the Warriors win was a big upset.

In the semifinals, Sadie DePasquale lost 6-0, 6-1 in first singles and Sadie Nolan lost 6-1, 6-2 in second singles. So it was up to the rest of the team, and they came through! In third singles, freshman Jessie Snyder had a comeback win in a tiebreaker. First doubles team Logan McCarthy and Gracyn Walsh won 6-1, 6-2, while second doubles team Ella Jackwicz and Eden Amorelli won 6-2, 6-4 to clinch the win.

Reflecting on the semifinal win, coach Ritchey told website Tap into Gold Coast, "It feels great to get through some tough teams—Ranney, Trinity Hall, and now Colts Neck—to reach the finals."

Although they beat one of the best teams in the Shore to reach the semifinals, they still had to take care of busi-



*The Tennis team is all smiles after winning the Shore Conference Championship*

ness in the finals against RFH.

The 1<sup>st</sup> doubles team of Gracyn and Logan won their match 6-0, 6-1, while the second doubles team of Eden and Ella had a strong 6-2, 6-3 win to set the stage for Nolan's de-



*Junior Sadie Nolan returns a serve in a match this season*

cluding match.

"This was a total team effort," head coach Ryan Ritchey told the Coast Star. "We have girls that could easily play first singles or second singles, and our depth really works for us."

Junior Sadie Nolan beat RFH player Savannah Porter in a super tiebreaker, 7-5, 3-6, (10-4) to clinch the match for the Warriors.

When asked if there was a lot of pressure in her deciding match, Sadie explained, "During my match I tried to

ignore the pressure and focus on each and every point, but it was hard because of how many people were watching and knowing I was the last match. Knowing it came down to me was scary but I'm glad it went the way it did."

Sadie's win was a great finish to the Shore Conference tournament, and all the girls were so excited. They were all so pumped to be able to win, especially because it had been so long since they won.

"Winning Shore Conference was honestly an unreal feeling. We worked so hard before and during the season to get to where we were during the tournament, and when we won it felt just so reassuring that our hard work paid off," Sadie said.

This year's win is just the beginning for the girl's tennis team, with hopes to possibly win again next year and come back even stronger next year in the state tournament.

The team this year had great camaraderie on and off the court, and their teamwork helped them along the way. Sadie explained their bond by saying, "As a team we were such a close-knit group, so it made the season so much more fun."

This season is over for the Warriors, but they are certainly looking ahead to future seasons and to keep getting better.

# Fun, Friends, and Great Field Hockey

By: Kelsey Kalemba

This year's field hockey team is a force to be reckoned with. The teamwork, skill, and talent are amazing, and every team that has to go against them should be prepared.

The team has an overall record of 5-4 and has played many tough teams so far this season. Their Shore Conference record is 3-2. They are ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Shore Conference group A South, just behind Point Boro and Southern.

Their toughest game was against Shore Regional, according to junior player and team captain Sophia Fontanez. "Shore was a very good team and even though we lost, it was the best we had played so far this season, and we were able to hold our own against them," she said.

According to the Instagram page the Shore Savages, Shore regional was ranked number 1 in the Shore, so it was amazing that Manasquan was able to play as well as they did.

Another really tough game was against Point Boro, which was the lowest scoring game for Point so far this year. They played Point Boro on September 24<sup>th</sup>, and the final score was a 4-0 loss.

According to senior player Ciara Dunne, "Point Boro was our best game, and we were able to hold them to only 4 goals. We had great defense the whole game, and it was definitely one of the highest points of our season."

Point Boro was also ranked by the Shore Savages, coming in at number 2 overall.

Head Coach Toni Bruno was impressed by their efforts, telling the Coast Star, "I was really proud of the way they played. They played a higher-level team and worked together and didn't get angry at each other. They stayed as one unit and worked hard".

The special thing about this



The 10 Seniors on this year's Field Hockey team

2025 team is the fact that they never back down. Even though they had tough games, they found a way to bounce back and find a big win.

They picked up a very important win on Thursday October 4 vs. St. Rose. It was Manasquan's senior day, which was very motivating for the team, according to senior Ciara. The team won 3-0 with the help of a great defensive effort.

According to the MHS field hockey Instagram page, the player of the game was Annie Det-



Sophomore player Loreli Vorhees goes for the ball in a game against Seneca this season

tinger, who did an amazing job on defense. This great defense really helped the Warriors, who needed this win to increase their win percentage. St. Rose is ranked number 2 in their B South division, so it was a very good win for Squan.

"St Rose used to be the best team we would play," said junior Carina Martell. "So, it was very exciting to be able to win against them, especially on Senior Day."

Even though the team has had a great season record-wise, the best thing about the team is their friendship and teamwork. Junior Abby Ziroli said that the goals for this season are to "Work together as a team, win games, and have fun," and that really reflects how they have been playing so far this season.

Freshman Juliana Fagan says that the "team building is great this year and there have been lots of pasta parties and fun activities." The team is very welcoming, and even freshmen feel like they have been playing with the team for a while.

Team chemistry is very important to them, and the teamwork is very apparent on and off the field. Captain Sophia says, "The team bond is amazing, and we are all best friends!"

They are all able to trust each other and just play their hardest while having fun, which is the importance of teamwork. They are certainly meeting the team goals, and they are having a good time doing it!

This 2025 team is certainly one to keep an eye on, with playoffs and Shore Conference games coming up. They have many big games in the upcoming weeks, and they are more than prepared to win all of them!

# Football Team Runs To Victory Yet Again, Reaches Central Group 2 Playoffs

By: Angelina Lomas

It's looking to be a great year for the Manasquan High School Football team.

With the scheduled season over, excluding the Thanksgiving Game, the Warriors has played 8 games with a record of 7 wins and 1 loss. They also have a 5 game winning streak.

On November 1, they defeated A.L. Johnson in the playoffs, dominating by a score of 35-0, for their sixth straight win. Justice Morgan and Dylan Lu scored two touchdowns each to lead the way.

Squan ended the regular season by defeating Colts Neck on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. It ended with a score of 34-14. Junior Kyle Dow led the game in passing yards with 103. Senior Justice Morgan led the game in

rushing yardage with 203. Junior Luke Barry led the game in tackles with 8.

Their game before that on Friday October 17<sup>th</sup> against Brick Township was another important game, which secured their spot in the playoffs. It ended with a score of 34-14. Ace Etienne led the game in rushing yardage and tackles, which is no surprise. He has led the way for most of the season.

Maxpreps.com, a high school sports-news website said, "Ace Etienne had an outrageously good game as he rushed for 183 yards and three



Above: Senior Dylan Lu runs for a touchdown

TDs while picking up 8.7 yards per carry."

Ace is a senior at Manasquan High school and has been playing football for 12 years. He has a total of 28 tackles this season, 1,058 rushing yards, and 17 touchdowns.

He's broken multiple

*continued on page 35*

Below: Football team poses for a picture; below right: Senior Ace Etienne runs the ball in for a touchdown.



# Volleyball Team on The Rise

By: Angelina Lomas

Passion, skill, and teamwork define Manasquan High School's Volleyball team this season.

After winning their game against Manchester Township on September 30th, the Manasquan Varsity Volleyball team had played 14 matches with a record of 7-7 in their 2025 season. That included a five game winning streak. Lead by their Head Coach Alexis Meslar, and their Assistant Coach Justin Barowski, it looks like the season is going to be full of success.

On Saturday, September 27th, the girls played one of the biggest rival teams of the conference, Saint Rose, and won. Senior Nicole Jacobs, had ten kills, making her the lead scorer of the game. Sophomore Julianne Runge lead in blocks, having two. Senior Lucia Grillo lead in assists, having eight.

"I can confidently say that this is one of the best teams that we have had at Manasquan, just talent-wise and heart and effort-wise. It's really great. It's a great group," said Coach Meslar.

On September 24th, the team played a great match against Brick Township, ending in an unfortunate 2-1 loss.

Meslar said, "Megan McCafferty had six aces. We had some crazy saves from Caitlyn Zalesky and Luccia Agrillo."



**Above: The team celebrates a 2-0 win against their rivals, Wall.**

Nicole led the game in kills, having seven. Elle Vitanzo led her team in blocks, having five.

On October 3rd, the Warriors played an impressive game against another big rival of theirs, Wall Township. This ended in an exciting 2-0 win for Manasquan. Nicole led the game in kills and blocks having 8 kills and 3 blocks, while Luccia led the game in assists, having 11.

According to Coach Barowski, the MHS Volleyball team started with Miss McCue as a club team in 2019. During the 2020-21 school year it became an official NJSIA sport. Coach Meslar has been coaching for five years after spending 5 years coaching at a school in Florida. Assistant coach Justin Barowski began coaching during the 2020-21 school year.

When players were asked how they felt about the team this year, almost all the people interviewed spoke about the team being tighter knit and more collaborative than last year.

"I think it's pretty good. We definitely play as a team more, and we have fun," said Nicole.

Overall, the team looks to be successful and improving by the day. Coach Barowski said, "It's about growing as players, and more importantly as people and helping guide them to become better students, better players, but most importantly, better people."



# Gymnastics Team Sticks the Season

By: Stella Brady

gymnasts, the girls had a great season overall.

The team had various wins against Point Pleasant Boro, Colts Neck, Freehold Borough, and Manasquan's most prominent rival – Wall.

Sophomore Ellie Shatkus felt that the team had a great season and answered enthusiastically when asked about her favorite part of the sport.

Ellie said, "My favorite part of gymnastics is my coach and teammates because they make every practice very fun."

In addition, Ellie explained that the team had a great season, specifically considering there were only five actively competing gymnasts.

"We were scoring anywhere from 97s to 100s," Ellie said. "That's pretty average for a high school team, especially considering only five girls are competing."

With the possibility of more girls joining next year, the team could have even stronger results.

Further, freshman Sofia DeLuca had a wonderful first season with the team.

"For my first season, it was very good," Sofia said. "I had a lot of fun and got to spend time with my friends."

Moreover, another standout athlete on the team was sophomore Alexandra "Beezie" O'Connor. Beezie had a great season and also emphasized that she loved the fun atmosphere of high school gymnastics.

Beezie said, "My favorite part of the season is that it isn't stressful, it's fun and you get to meet new people."

Beezie loves the sport but has a few events she likes most. When asked which event she prefers, she said, "My favorite events are bars and floor."

Although Manasquan gymnastics is done for this year, great things lie in the team's future next year.



**Above: Sophmores Beezie O'Connor and Ellie Shatkus and Coach Michaela Reed**

The Manasquan High School Gymnastics team leaped into a fun and successful season!

Although the season started off rough for the girls with 4 consecutive losses, they managed to turn it around and win numerous matches. Clearly, the dedication and love for their sport allowed the girls to bounce back and have a wonderful season.

Coached by former MHS student Michaela Reed, the team consisted of freshmen Sofia DeLuca and MaKenna Powers, sophomores Gia Frattaroli, Brenna Gordon, Alexandra (Beezie) O'Connor, and Ellie Shatkus, and senior Mia Moore. Despite their small roster and only five actively competing

**Below: Sophomore Beezie O'Connor on bars**



# Cheerleaders Bring Squan Spirit

By: Darcy Furniss

Cheerleading is a sport that's often overlooked, but many people don't realize how much work, skill, and dedication the team puts in. Not just during their performances, but also through everything they do for Manasquan High School and the community. Cheer has two main seasons, fall and winter. While most athletes participate in both, some choose to focus on one.

Cheering is more than just a sport, it's a family. When sophomore Annie Lomas was asked what her favorite part about cheer was, she said, "Definitely the people. I love all the girls I cheer with." That sense of teamwork and support is something that defines the program both on and off the sidelines.

During the fall season, the team cheers for the football players and works hard to keep the crowd energized and entertained during the game. Each week after the team's pasta party, the cheerleaders deliver baskets to the football players. The senior players even get their houses decorated before every game. Senior Sophia Covert shared one of her favorite pasta party themes, "My

favorite pasta party was Jersey Shore theme since it was the first one, and it really gave me a chance to connect with the team outside of practice."

Beyond the decorations and baskets, their dedication shines through every routine and every cheer. "People don't always see how much time and effort we put in," said senior Natalie Global. "We spend hours practicing jumps, dances, and stunts to make sure everything looks perfect."

When the winter season arrives, the focus shifts from football fields to basketball courts, but the hard work never stops. Although the team no longer decorates houses or delivers baskets, they continue to show up with the same ener-



Cheer Team spells out manasquan during halftime



Above: Cheer Team captains posing for a photo

gy and enthusiasm. The cheerleaders perform halftime dances, lead cheers, and keep the gym atmosphere alive throughout every home game.

"Winter cheer is just as exciting," said Natalie. "It's more up close with the crowd, so you really feel the energy in the gym."

Overall, these athletes put in countless hours of practice and community involvement, all while balancing school and other responsibilities. Their commitment and spirit truly make a difference on the sidelines, in the stands, and throughout the school community.

As Annie Lomas summed it up, "Cheer is all something that we really love."

Right now, the team is focused on wrapping up their fall season. As they get ready to cheer on the Warriors in the upcoming Thanksgiving game against Wall, they are ready to bring the same energy, teamwork, and spirit as they've done all year.

# Girls Soccer Team Shines Bright with Strong Season, Big Victory over Wall

By: Myles Carstens and Susannah Patterson

The Girls Soccer team here at Manasquan High School isn't just playing a game, they're playing for tradition and striving for excellence in each kick of the ball.

The team, coached by Bailey Price and captained by student-athletes Sam Price (Jr.), Addie Gunnell (Sr.), and Jordyn Hollowell (Sr.), is currently 5-2 and they are in high hopes of going far in both the state and Shore Conference tournaments this year.

Other than winning games and scoring lots of goals, Bailey Price, head coach of the team and administrative assistant of the high school



says, "My favorite part of being head coach is forming relationships with all the girls." Price takes on a more personal and approachable style of coaching. She added, "It's fun seeing them all grow older and develop not only as players, but as People too."

The two losses that the Warriors have suffered came against strong Manalapan and Middletown South



Above: The Team celebrates after their hard-earned 1-0 win over Wall

teams, but those losses did not harm the team's morale for long.

Our losses don't define us," says senior captain Addison Gunnell.

She's right. A very special recent game that the Warriors played was against their rivals, Wall High School. The rivalry game was played at the Manasquan turf and was intense the entire eighty minutes. With strength and persistence, the Warriors pulled through with a 1-0 win thanks to a clutch goal by junior Gabby Restivo on a header off a pinpoint corner kick sent in by sophomore Charlotte Leible.

Following her golden goal, Gabby told the Coast Star, "I am actually speechless, I didn't think it was going to go in. I'm so proud of the team for doing everything we practiced and so glad we could get to the end of it."

Both Gabby and the rest of the team were ecstatic since it was the first time that the girls have beaten Wall since 2002, and Warrior pride shined extra bright that day. The team came together to obtain a hard-to-reach goal, and they accomplished it, leading to an abundance of both excitement and joy.

The team's chemistry is also through the roof and has been a distinct characteristic of the squad even before the major victory over the Crimson Knights.

"I think out chemistry this year is really

continued on next page

# Boys Soccer Drops Heartbreaker in State Tournament

By: Myles Carstens

Hoping to sustain their rhythm following a season's long success, the Manasquan Boys Soccer team competed in the State Tournament earlier this month.

On November 4th against Delran High School the Warriors won by a score of 4-1 on their homefield. They followed that with another victory this time against Cinnaminson, by a closer score of 4-3. At that point the high scoring Warriors were excited for what was ahead.

Facing Wall on their home turf, the Warriors knew that a victory would put them in the championship game. This was a battle between rivals, and it went to overtime.

A penalty kick shootout to decide the winner. Wall made one more shot than Manasquan, and took the 1-0 victory. A heartbreaker for the Warriors.

Going into the tournament, the Warriors held a record of 9-3-1, a very strong season with their strength of schedule, injury problems



Attached: Richie Conklin (Left) and Myles Carstens smile after a shut-out win.

and a first year head coach, Zach Savacool.

The strategist behind the team's tactics and a psychology teacher, Mr. Savacool said, "I believe in my guys. When we come together as one, we are really good and positive."

Throughout the season, the Warriors took down top ranked teams like Southern, Freehold Boro, and Point Boro.

They also defeated recent Shore Conference Tournament Champions, Middletown South with a statement 4-2 win back in September; proving to everyone that they can be legit contenders, and a team to look out for.

Going into the state tournament, top goalscorer and captain for the team Cruz Farkas said, "There are no more second chances. We have to go into this game as focused and as concentrated as any other. If we play our game, we are very capable of beating anyone."

Covering a recurring issue, the health status of the squad during the season has been anything but positive, and it has been a factor that has weakened the Warriors specifically in the second half of



Above: Warriors huddles up together before a game.

the season. Some players who have experienced an injury this season are Rey Weinseimer (Jr.) (former starting right-back who always brought energy and fierce tackles into the game), Maceo Manno (Jr.), (the "super-sub" who scored in five of the eight games that he was subbed on to, essential for an offensive spark coming off of the bench), and Travis Levy, (a young sophomore center back who always stabilized the defense when he was on the pitch). Both Rey and Maceo faced season ending leg injuries, however Travis faced an ankle injury that only had him miss two games.

The Junior "Super sub" Maceo Manno explains that, "I wish I could still play with the team, there is just something about the energy and excitement for every game that made me want to give my all every time I stepped onto the field. I am truly so grateful

# Football

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school records throughout his high school career. He holds the school record for the most rushing touchdowns in a single game, the most points scored in a single game, and the most regular touchdowns in a single game. He has the fifth most rushing yards in a single game and the sixth highest average carry per season. His skill makes him a huge factor in the team's success this season.

The team's head coach, Coach Price, is another major factor in the success the team has been having in their 2025 season. He's been coaching at Manasquan for 31 years, coaching a year at Pompton Lakes High School and a year at Allentown High School before that. This year he became Manasquan's sec-

ond-winningest coach, with the most wins for the Warriors behind only the legendary Vic Kubu.

Although the team lost in the playoffs to Camden, something to look forward to is the Thanksgiving rivalry game on November 27th. This year, the game will be played away at Wall, which makes it even more exciting. It should be a great way to end the season and a game that fans and players will remember.

Overall, it's been a good season for the Warriors, with plenty of talent and even greater attitude and teamwork leading the way. "Their greatest strength is their desire and willingness to play for and with each other," said Coach Price. "And I think right now, our greatest weakness is we just gotta focus it a little bit more on the little things."

Let's get that focus, and beat Wall!



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# Girls



# Boys

for my teammates."

Despite all the challenges they faced, at the end of the day the

Warriors overcame nearly all of the obstacles and came close to their goal of a championship. Expect passion, aggression, and strong mindset whenever Manasquan takes the field, because it's more than just a game, its for the grit and passion of the program. Losing to Wall hurt, but did not ruin this team's outlook at all.

good. We have a lot of different personalities on the field but everybody gets along and everybody works together," said Coach Price.

Senior, student athlete, and striker for the team Claire Bannerman says that her favorite part of being on the team is, "the players, I enjoy playing a sport with my friends together."

This team's bond is definitely something that separates them from the others, and the players and coaches hold their responsibility well in not letting this strong tradition go.

With all of the girls on the team being very close they have been able to do a great job working together and enjoying the season. Freshman Lexie Liebler says her favorite part is "the girls, everyone is so nice and welcoming."

"I love going to practice every day and seeing all my friends," says junior Sam Price.

That says it best.