



SUMMER 2026

HERRICKS HIGH SCHOOL Celebrates the *class of 2026*

The Herricks community gathered on June 25 to celebrate the graduation of 407 members of the Herricks High School Class of 2026. The commencement ceremony recognized the graduates' achievements and the many family members, educators and mentors who helped them reach this milestone.

The celebration began with a processional by the Herricks High School Band under the direction of Mr. Stickley, setting an inspiring tone as graduates entered to the cheers of family, friends and faculty.

Principal Joan Keegan welcomed the audience by encouraging graduates to reflect on the experiences that shaped their high school years. While celebrating their accomplishments, she reminded students that their greatest growth came through perseverance, meaningful relationships and the everyday choices that helped define who they have become.

"Class of 2026, your story is not just told in transcripts or accolades – it is written in thousands of small, meaningful choices that brought you to this very day," Principal Keegan said. She also thanked parents, families, district leadership, faculty and staff for supporting the graduates throughout their journey.

The ceremony recognized longtime Board of Education trustees Jim Gounaris and Henry Zanetti for their lasting contributions to Herricks schools. Principal Keegan also welcomed Board of Education Vice President and Class of 2026 parent Maria Bono and PTSA President Lauren Marzo to share a few words, recognizing the strong partnership between families and the school community.

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Herricks Dateline

HERRICKS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Message from *The Board of Education*

Dear Herricks Community,

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

Throughout the year, we saw students show up for one another and rise to every challenge with courage and heart. Whether working together in classrooms, performing on stage, competing on the field (and in championship games!), or helping a friend through a difficult day, our students demonstrated what it means to be collaborative, compassionate and confident.

We saw critical thinking in action, creativity flourish and communication strengthen our community. These are the skills that matter, not just for success in school but throughout life. We are proud of the way our students continue to grow into thoughtful, engaged citizens.

As we look ahead to a new school year, we are excited to welcome our newest Board of Education members, Lisa Iuculano and Athul Santhosh, both of whom have deep roots in the Herricks community. We look forward to working together as one team, building on Herricks' tradition of excellence and ensuring every student can thrive.

To the Class of 2026, congratulations on your remarkable accomplishments and best wishes for all that lies ahead. To everyone returning in the fall, we cannot wait to welcome you back with new opportunities, fresh ideas and renewed energy.

Lastly, LET'S GO KNICKS!! While no one can predict the future, we do know this: When a community believes in one another and works together, amazing things can happen. That's the spirit we'll carry into the new school year as we continue cheering on every student, every classroom and every success.

Until then, we wish you a safe, relaxing and joyful summer.

With gratitude and hope,
Your Board of Education

At the Top of Their Class

VALEDICTORIAN AARTHI PALANIAPPAN

Aarthi has distinguished herself as a scholar, leader and compassionate community member, consistently striving to make a positive impact on others.

She has held numerous leadership roles, including president of Science Olympiad, vice president of Mathletes, executive treasurer of Student Government, director of strategy for the Junior Economic Club of New York City and vice president of production for the Yearbook Committee. A talented musician, she earned All-State recognition for bassoon and inspired younger students through mentorship.

Aarthi's intellectual curiosity extends beyond the classroom through research and internships, including work at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and submission to the Regeneron Science Talent Search. She also founded Threads of Tomorrow to support underserved communities worldwide.

Starting this fall, Aarthi will be attending the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School where she will be studying economics and biology.



SALUTATORIAN ANGELINA LIU

Angelina has excelled as a scholar, musician and community leader throughout her high school years. A passionate researcher, she pursued medical science through the Science Research Program, conducting an ovarian cancer study at Memorial Sloan Kettering's Zuckerman Research Center aimed at improving understanding and treatment of the disease. She challenged herself with a rigorous academic program that included AP Statistics, Multivariable Calculus and work toward the Seal of Biliteracy.

An accomplished violinist, she is concertmaster of the Herricks Chamber Orchestra, a first-chair musician in the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra and an All-State performer. She also founded the Nassau Music Scholars Program to expand access to music education.

Angelina will be attending Johns Hopkins University where she will be majoring in molecular and cellular biology on the pre-med track.



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Student speakers reflected on the relationships and experiences that shaped their time at Herricks.

Class President Kush Vania described Senior Sunset as far more than watching the sun go down. "What we experienced was much more than just a sunset," he said. "That's what community is ... and maybe, just maybe, that community is the greatest achievement we've had in these four years."

Student Government Executive Board President Emma Su delivered an address titled "The Road Here," emphasizing that success is never achieved alone. Sharing lessons from science research coordinator Ms. Etri, she reminded classmates that their worth extends far beyond grades or college acceptances.

"The people who have truly impacted our lives did not value us because of what we achieved; they valued us because of who we are," she said.

Herricks' multicultural community was celebrated as students welcomed guests in the many native languages spoken by district families, reflecting the diversity that defines the school district.

Director of Fine and Performing Arts Ms. Anissa Arnold, recognized for 25 years of dedicated service to Herricks, introduced the ceremony's final student speakers.

Salutatorian Angelina Liu encouraged classmates to appreciate life's unexpected moments, reminding graduates that while goals and achievements

matter, many of the most meaningful memories happen outside carefully planned expectations.

Valedictorian Aarthi Palaniappan used the image of a jigsaw puzzle to describe the people who shape our lives. Reflecting on the loss of her father at a young age, she encouraged classmates to remember those who guide, support and inspire them throughout life's journey.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tony Sinanis congratulated the graduates and expressed his pride in serving as their superintendent throughout their high school experience. He also recognized Assistant Superintendent Elizabeth Guercin, who is retiring after 25 years of service to Herricks, for her compassionate leadership and dedication to students and staff.

Following a performance of the alma mater conducted by graduate and All-State Vocal Jazz honoree Isabella Marzo, Principal Keegan officially certified the Class of 2026 for graduation and offered one final message. "Be strong. Be fearless. Be true. And remember the importance of the people who stand beside you along the way," she said. "May your Herricks experience remain your compass."

With the traditional turning of the tassels, the Class of 2026 officially became Herricks High School alumni, ready to begin the next chapter while carrying forward the lessons, friendships and memories that made their time at Herricks so meaningful.

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



HERRICKS UNION FREE SCHOOL
DISTRICT
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NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
PAID
GARDEN CITY, NY
PERMIT NO. 1491

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Maria Bono, President

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Trustees:

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Lisa Iuculano

Athul Santhosh

Dr. Tony Sinanis

Superintendent of Schools

Visit www.herricks.org for more district news and information!

Celebrating Milestones and New Beginnings

Caps off to the amazing students across the district who took part in our June moving-up ceremonies! The events were truly unforgettable, highlighted by thoughtful student reflections, inspiring words of wisdom from our faculty and spectacular musical performances.

As summer begins, we want to give a special shoutout to our newest middle schoolers and high schoolers. Your Herricks family is so proud of you, and we look forward to supporting you in the exciting school year ahead!



Herricks Middle School



Center Street Elementary



Denton Avenue Elementary



Searingtown Elementary

