The Eagle Flyer

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Congrats Del Debbio!

After teaching nearly 30 years, Kennedy grad credits teachers: "Science can be fun"

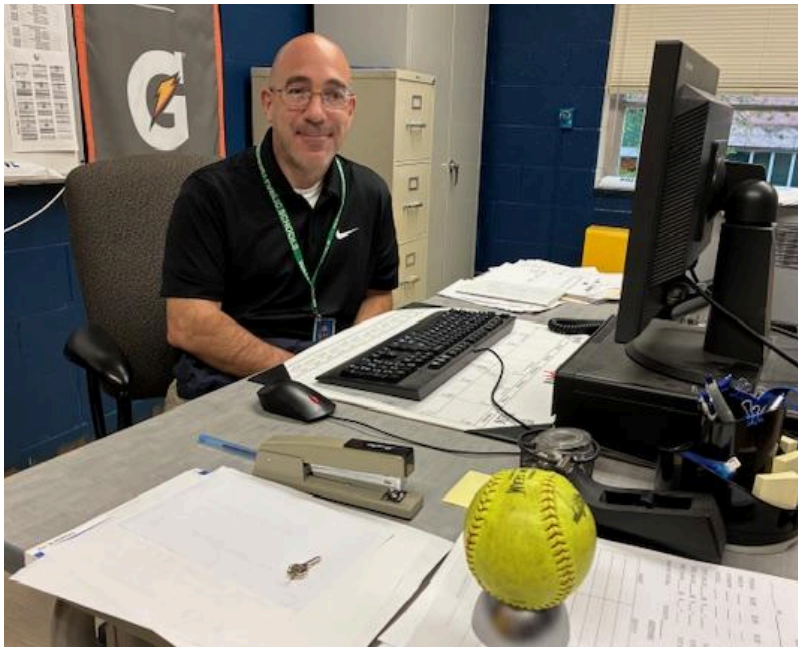
By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor

Science Department Chair and Athletic Director, Mr. Joseph 'Joe' Del Debbio, won the 2026 Teacher of the Year award because other teachers felt he deserved their nominations which then lead to the committee reviewing and eventually choosing the winner, announced by Principal Mr. Johnston at a faculty meeting after school, Monday, March 2, 2026.

Del Debbio acknowledged the wonderful teachers he had who made the subject fun for him.

"I had great science teachers at Kennedy when I was a student. It kind of showed me that science can be fun," he said.

Any other reasons? "Long story short, my uncle was a science teacher at West Side and he really was my inspiration to be a science teacher," he said.



DEL DEBBIO IN ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, ROOM 140
Teacher of the Year Mr. Del Debbio was found working here Thursday, April 30 at 6:45 a.m., his typical spot other than his room 250 (which was where he had Physics class as a senior). Photo by Dr. Cybart-Persenaire

AND he is the Athletic Director? "I'm responsible for all functionality for all sports. Scheduling, bussing, officials, athletic workers, fire/EMS, police, and maintainers," he said.

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He chose to fill the role after seeing how the school was stuck without one.

"When the previous athletic director left, we were left with a void," he said.

Del Debbio mentioned he had…

"...fondness to the athletic department."

When taking on a job like that, you are advised to manage your time well.

"I had the time to do it. It is very time consuming," he said.

Del Debbio is at Kennedy weekdays from 6 a.m. to a little after 9 p.m. He checks emails, makes sure the weather is convenient, calls other athletic directors to see if games are still on that day, and much more.

Del Debbio graduated from Tinker Elementary School, West Side Middle School and Kennedy High School; next he attended UConn Waterbury for two years, then Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) for his last two years of college. Eventually, he went for his Master's in natural sciences at CCSU, then his administration certification at the University of Bridgeport.

"I didn't go to school for teaching right away," he said, since he wanted to put the degree for a different use.

He worked as a chemist for around two years, then turned to teaching.

"This is my 28th year. I came here in 2006; I was at West Side for five or six years before that," he said.

He taught at Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, then Pomperaug High School in Middlebury, both for two years, West Side for five or six years, and finally Kennedy.

"I always make sure that whatever came before me, I was prepared to handle," he said. "So I always try to be ready."

"Aside from school, I'm a marine safety officer, so I'm responsible for all aquatic safety," he said, noting the motto is "always ready," according to the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

"I always lived by that motto," he said.

Del Debbio's favorite part of teaching?

"The students," he said.

Fun fact: his classroom, 250, was his senior physics class, which he described as…

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"Reminiscent; but it gives me a lot of pride to be an alumni myself," he said.

He is still in contact with former students and loves to see them move onto…

"...bigger and better things," he said.

Del Debbio was asked if he expected to win the award.

"No. Nope. And I'm very humble where I don't like acknowledging it. I'm not good with compliments," he said.

Not sure how to explain it, he just said…

"I (want to) do my job and be left alone," he said, followed with a laugh.

He truly enjoys his job that he does not expect nor care for an award or any sort of recognition.

"I'm not doing it for an award, I'm doing it because I like it," he said.

In fact, a highlight of his career was being on Highland Ave.

"When I came back to Kennedy to teach," he said.

According to the Monday Morning News weekly email sent out by Principal Mr. Johnston, the Palace Theater in Waterbury hosted the awards ceremony for city teachers selected as Teachers of the Year, along with support staff and administrators who won, Monday, May 11, 2025 at 5 p.m.

Something Del Debbio wanted to mention was the school staff.

"You're only as good as the people you have around you," he said, implying the other teachers in the school. Del Debbio greatly appreciates the love and support from all his colleagues!



PARKING IS THE LEAST OF HIS WORRIES!
While this stock photo is not from the school parking lot, Teacher of the Year Mr. Del Debbio said he is in the building weekdays from 6 a.m. to a little after 9 p.m., so finding a parking spot shouldn't be a problem. Image from Google

Superintendent shares his journey, starting as teacher in Hartford



DR. SCHWARTZ VISITS MAY 8 Journalism II students met and got to ask questions of Waterbury Superintendent of Schools Dr. Darren M. Schwartz, who visited room 105 during Period 1B Friday, May 8, 2026. From left to right to right are seniors Aiden Robinson, Matthew Twasam and Bryan Cruz Santiago; junior Lexa Padilla-Nieves; sophomores Safiya Arnold and Alexus Riuz; Dr. Schwartz; seniors Jose Lopez, Tefta Mino (Sports Editor), Joslyn Tremblay (Managing Editor), and Alexi Knott; junior Corissa Hunter; senior Arielle Henry; and juniors Genesis Rodriguez and Ivana Camacho-Vega. Photo by Dr. Cybart-Persenaire

See related Commentary on page 5

Superintendent shares his journey

By Bryan Cruz Santiago
Staff Writer

"Do what you think is right…let everything settle itself," said Superintendent Dr. Darren M. Schwartz.

Dr. Schwartz, Waterbury Superintendent of Schools, visited the Journalism class in Room 105 at Kennedy after accepting an invitation from Journalism teacher Dr. Cybart-Persenaire, arriving on the dot at 8 a.m. Friday May 8, 2026.

"(I was told to) get ready for the '3 D' 's, Disappointment, Disappointment and Disappointment," said Schwartz when he mentioned wanting to become a teacher to one of his own high school teachers.

Right off the bat, Dr. Schwartz began a quick introduction that contained many details about his journey, like going from teacher, to math coach, to intervention specialist, to principal by his 30th birthday.

"I knew I wanted to be a teacher since 4th grade," said Schwartz when asked about his motivations for becoming a teacher.

He also mentioned that his father went from "farm boy" to the Navy and finally an aeronautical engineer; this, alongside his mother working for the University of Hartford, gave him many opportunities and free tuition as the son of a person who worked there, paying off greatly as he now leads the entire City of Waterbury Public School System.

"Do I have the ultimate say? Yes…I'm technically the CEO," said Schwartz.

He's proven to be reliable as well, being very casual yet professional as he spoke about his goals for 2026-2027, like finalizing the Strategic Plan for the district in Q3, finding opportunities for students such as continuing the Waterbury Promise scholarship which provides $5,000 annually to qualifying college-bound seniors, and looking over things like consequences for students and how to actually help them.

"I want to establish paths for students, not just college, but also AI-proof careers…(we're) looking at trades," said Schwartz.



DR. SCHWARTZ VISITED MAY 8 Journalism II students (from left to right) senior Jose Lopez, junior Genesis Rodriguez, junior Lexa Padilla-Nieves, Sports Editor and senior Tefta Mino, Managing Editor and senior Joslyn Tremblay, and junior Ivana Camacho-Vega met Waterbury Superintendent of Schools Dr. Darren M. Schwartz Friday, May 8, 2026 when he visited Period 1B. Schwartz shared his journey from being an elementary school teacher in Hartford to being officially named superintendent in Waterbury May 1, 2025. Photo by Dr. Cybart-Persenaire

Unforgettable rhythms: students shine at prom

By Corinna Hunter
Staff Writer COMMENTARY

Approximately 275 Kennedy students and invited guests attended the prom Friday, May 15, 2026 at La Bella Vista, 380 Farmwood Road in Waterbury, Conn with tickets sold for $95 from mid-March to the end of April, and the event taking place from 5:30 p.m. - 11 p.m.

After the theme Rhythms of Rio was released, that's all students were talking about for the next three months. It's all they could talk about! Prom is one of the most sought-out events besides Graduation, and it's a big deal. Students get to dress up and have what feels like a night out with friends; it's very lighthearted and brings students together in a way.

The event is only for juniors and seniors. Anyone else has to be invited to go. Students were even allowed to bring people from other schools; it's just like a big party.

Nobody has anything bad to say about it so far. One junior, Corissa Hunter, said she wishes she could go back and do it over.

"Not because I would change anything," Hunter said. "It was just so fun, and I'm sad I can't relive the moments."

There were good words from the teachers, who took the time to chaperone as well. Principal Mr. Johnston got on the morning announcements Monday, May 18, the next school day, to praise students, saying he



RHYTHMS OF RIO THEME Seniors who enjoyed the prom Friday May 15, 2026 at La Bella Vista were (from left to right) Corinna Hunter, Jaxiel Burgos, and Elisha Watts. Photo courtesy of Corinna Hunter

received many compliments on how respectful they were, and how they conducted themselves. Students represented Kennedy in the best way possible, and made it a night to remember.



PROM AT LA BELLA VISTA Senior Tefta Mino (left photo) along with senior Corinna Hunter (right photo, on left) and junior Corissa Hunter display their prom dresses Friday, May 15, 2026. Photo (left) courtesy of T. Mino and photo (right) courtesy of C. Hunter

Mark Memorial Day May 25 by learning more

How does May holiday differ from November's Veterans Day?

By Bryan Cruz Santiago
Staff Writer

Veterans Day honors all soldiers who served and are serving in the United States military, while Memorial Day pays respects to those who have lost their lives during service – with ceremonies and memorial services occurring for Veterans Day and Memorial Day Nov. 11 and the last Monday of May (May 25, 2026), respectively.

"Memorial Day…honors the men and women who died while serving in the military," according to www.hfotusa.org, a website for Homes for Our Troops, dedicated to building/donating homes nationwide for severely injured post 9/11 veterans.

Although the two federal holidays are similar, they have different focuses.

"Veterans Day…is designated as a day to honor the more than 19 million men and women who have served in the U.S. military," according to www.uso.org, the website for USO which aims to strengthen the well-being of the people serving in America's military and their families.



DIFFERENCES IN MOOD Where Veterans Day may typically be for celebrating the living, Memorial Day is marked by visits to cemeteries like the visit to Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia as seen here (photo on right) Monday, May 27, 2024. Photos from www.medalsofamerica.com (left), www.seattletimes.com by Jacquelyn Martin (right)

Despite the distinction, the days are both taken seriously on a national level.

"Veteran's Day Moment of Silence Act…(is) calling on the people to observe a two-minute national moment of silence on Veterans Day at 3:11 p.m. Atlantic standard time," according to news.va.gov, which wants to honor President Lincoln's promise to care for veterans and their relatives.

Veterans Day has its own traditional celebrations, like parades and ceremonies, and Memorial Day is no different.

"Memorial Day…(is) day of recognition when American flags are planted on gravesites to recognize and honor our fallen," according to veterans.nv.gov, the website for the Nevada Department of Veterans Services, which has helped an estimated 250,000 Nevada veterans.

Pride Month origins honor 1969 uprising

Visibility of LGBTQ+ identity, fight for equal rights continues

By Jose Lopez
Staff Writer

Pride Month is to honor LGBTQ+ identity, culture and history, while advocating for equal rights and visibility in the United States and is celebrated each year to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising on the last Sunday in the month of June for the activists who fought against oppression.

"The 1960s and preceding decades were not welcoming times for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans. … For such reasons, LGBT individuals flocked to gay bars and clubs, places of refuge where they could express themselves openly and socialize without worry. However, the New York State Liquor Authority penalized and shut down establishments that served alcohol to known or suspected LGBT individuals, arguing the mere gathering of homosexuals was 'disorderly,' " according to history.com, the A&E TV Networks site.

Things went from bad to worse in NYC.

"One account suggests that the tipping point came when police tried to arrest a gender nonconforming lesbian that some (people)



HERE COMES PRIDE MONTH- The well awaited month to be anything you can put your mind to! Image from nickelodeonparents.com

credit as Stormé DeLarverie who somehow evaded the police and began to push against a police car in protest, screaming out to their peers, 'Why don't you do something? Why are you just standing there?' " according to american.edu, a research university in Washington, D.C.

A year after the uprising, in 1970 the initial celebration took place in New York City.

"One year later, the first Pride Week and Pride Parade took place on Christopher Street, organized by Brenda Howard and a group of other activists in New York. The parade would amass a crowd numbering into the thousands and stretched 15 city blocks. …the New York Pride Parade is still one of the largest and most well-known parades to take place, with over 2 million people estimated to have taken part in 2019," according to nascsp.org, the National Association for States Community Services Programs to prevent and reduce poverty.

D-Day: 82 years of remembering

Honoring soldiers June 6 for Allied invasion of Normandy, pivotal in ending WWII

By Joslyn Tremblay
Managing Editor

D-Day was the Allied invasion on the beaches of Normandy in Northern France which occurred to liberate German-occupied France and establish a western front for a pivotal moment in World War ll June 6, 1944 and this killed and wounded 9,000 Allied soldiers, who are remembered Saturday, June 6, 2026 on the 82nd anniversary.

"On June 6, 1944, nearly 160,000 Allied troops landed along a 50-mile stretch of heavily-fortified French coastline, to fight Nazi Germany on the beaches of Normandy, France. More than 5,000 Ships and 13,000 aircraft supported the D-Day invasion, and by day's end, the Allies gained a foot-hold in Continental Europe. The cost in lives on D-Day was high. More than 9,000 Allied soldiers were killed or wounded, but their sacrifice allowed more than 100,000 soldiers to begin the slow, hard slog across Europe, to defeat Adolf Hitler's crack troops," according to army.mil, the official homepage of the United States Army.

Their fighting lasted for almost one full year before the Nazis surrendered finally.



HONOR AND RECOGNIZE the 82nd anniversary of the Allied invasion on the beaches of Normandy in Northern France, where more than 9,000 were killed or wounded. Some people will visit historical sites in Normandy, attend local memorial ceremonies, or support veteran organizations. Images from alamy.com

"There would be months of hard fighting in Europe before the Nazis finally surrendered in May 1945, but the D-Day invasion gave the Allies the success they needed to initiate the campaigns that would lead to the liberation of Occupied Europe," according to nationalww2museum.org, a New Orleans museum designed to educate visitors on the American experience in World War ll.

Ever wondered what D in D-Day stands for?

"There's a bit of confusion about the actual meaning of the 'D' in 'D-Day.' One popular view, often repeated in France, is that it stands for 'disembarkation' or 'debarkation' and refers to the invading Allied troops disembarking from their landing craft. Other, more far-fetched explanations also sometimes heard in America is that the letter stands for 'decision,' 'deliverance' or 'doom.' None of these ideas, however, hold any water," according to beachesofnormandy.com, the official website for Beaches of Normandy Tours.

National Cancer Survivors Day June 7 = hope

By Matthew Twasam
Staff Writer

Even though cancer survivors are celebrated day in and day out, this day in June highlights their defeat to their specific cancers, and Sunday June 7, 2026 is called National Cancer Survivors Day, because cancer has taken the lives of a plethora of people. Survivors out there are recognized by holding celebrations such as parades, festivals and testimonies by cancer survivors; in general this is an outreach to spread the word, in the United States mainly.

“Cancer may be a part of my journey, but it does not define my destination,” according to survivor Emily Carter as posted on www.caringbridge.org, a no-cost, non profit health platform sharing “Encouraging Words for Survivors and Fighters.”

This is a yearly event held in early June.

“National Cancer Survivors Day is celebrated annually on the first Sunday in June. In 2026, this falls on June 7,” accord-according to stjude.org/, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, which treats childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases.

“Surround yourself with only people who are going to lift you higher,” is attributed to Oprah Winfrey, as posted on the website



IN 2026 NCSD FALLS ON SUNDAY June 7 marks National Cancer Survivors Day, a time that “symbolizes hope and recognizes the journeys of millions of survivors,” according to oncologics.net. Image from pioneerrx.com

www.caringbridge.org, under “Quotes About Hope and Strength.”

¨On this day every year, communities around the world come together to show their camaraderie, joy and hope. In the past, countries including South Africa, Barbados, Trinidad, Sweden, Italy, Greece, India, Malaysia and more have come together to celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day,” according to cancersmoc.com/, the Southeastern Medical Oncology Center (SMOC) dedicated to providing the people of North Carolina the most advanced, effective and appropriate cancer today.

When you feel like giving up, remember why you started.

“National Cancer Survivors Day is more than a celebration; it symbolizes hope and recognizes the journeys of millions of survivors. It honors those who have survived, supports those still battling, and remembers loved ones lost,” according to oncologics.net/, a website recognizing the importance of giving patients hope through having a positive, upbeat attitude.

June 14: celebrate American flag, 249 years young

By Bryan Cruz Santiago
Staff Writer



50-STAR FLAG was adopted July 4, 1960 thanks to President Dwight D. Eisenhower after the 50th state, Hawaii, became official August 21, 1959.
Photo from www.jconline.com

Did you know that Flag Day isn't a federal holiday?

Flag Day is a national holiday that celebrates the adoption of the Stars and Stripes flag, representing freedom, unity, and democratic ideals, with participants displaying the flag, attending parades, having picnics, and lighting fireworks Sunday, June 14, 2026.

"The 'Stars and Stripes' was designated the official National symbol of the United States of America by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777 – the fifth item on the agenda that day," according to www.flagday foundation.com, the website for the Flag Day Foundation, who aims to carry on the tradition of the first Flag Day celebration.

Much, much later (139 years, to be exact), celebrations about it became set in stone.

"...in 1916, President Woodrow Wilson marked the anniversary of that decree by officially establishing June 14 as Flag Day," according to www.history.com, a digital library, educational platform and official partner to the HISTORY Channel.

Funnily enough, the current and longest serving version of the flag, the 50-Star American flag, was sent in by a student.

"In 1958, with Alaska and Hawaii likely to become states, Bob Heft decided to design a 50-star flag for a history project during his junior year of high school," according to america250.org, a national, non-partisan organization charged by Congress to rally support for celebrating America's 250th anniversary Saturday, July 4, 2026.

Even though national events like this can seem 'far away,' Flag Day has local roots.

"According to tradition, the city of Hartford, Conn. began this patriotic custom on June 14, 1861…" according to nationalflag foundation.org, a nonprofit organization whose focus surrounds the American flag, garnering awareness, alongside care and handling tips. "...after native son Victor Morris urged his community to celebrate the 84th anniversary of the adoption of the American flag with a special day of remembrance."

Juneteenth dates to Texas 1865 but Biden signs in ’21

By Leonidas Rodriguez
Staff Writer

Newly freed Black Texans began celebrating their freedom June 19, 1865, but it became a national holiday in 2021 by then-President Joe Biden to celebrate the fact they were no longer enslaved.

“Freedom finally came on June 19, 1865, when some 2,000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas. The army announced that the more than 250,000 enslaved black people in the state were free by executive decree. This day came to be known as ‘Juneteenth,’ by the newly freed people in Texas,” according to nmaahc.si.edu, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History & Culture.

Over time, the importance of Juneteenth expanded far beyond Texas as more Americans began recognizing and celebrating the holiday nationwide.

“In the 20th century, as African Americans from Texas and neighboring states spread throughout the country, so too did Juneteenth celebrations. In 1980, Texas became the first to make it a state holiday. Shortly thereafter, other states followed suit, along with organizations and businesses across the nation hosting events and



TIME TO CELEBRATE Due to the Thursday May 7, 2026 Board of Education vote waiving the four water main break days off from school, the last day is now June 18, just in time for Juneteenth celebrations. Image from neighborhoodeconomics.org

educational opportunities dedicated to commemorating the significance of this day. In 2021, the day became a national holiday,” according to stpetersburg.usf.edu, which is a “public metropolitan research university in South Florida.”

As Juneteenth gained national recognition, the movement to officially honor the holiday eventually led to federal action.

“On June 17, 2021 President Joe Biden signed, with Members of Congress, the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act at the White House. Recognizing Juneteenth as a federal holiday also gives Americans the opportunity to contemplate the complicated processes of emancipation that took place after President Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862,” according to capitolhistory.org, which has “worked to preserve and share the history of the Capitol, The Congress and those who work therein.”

Juneteenth: day of freedom now recognized 6/19

Museum calls it country's "second Independence Day"

By Ivana Camacho
Staff Writer



DID YOU KNOW? This date, June 19, is important because it was the exact date that slaves were freed in Texas when the announcement was made by Union soldiers in Galveston. Approximately 250,000 people were enslaved in Texas at the time.
Image from fenwayhealth.org/marking-juneteenth-2025/

Juneteenth celebrates the date of June 19, 1865, when enslaved African Americans earned their freedom. It is a day for Americans to reflect on the struggles and sacrifices of the enslaved, recognizing those freed in Galveston, Texas, and was signed into law June 17, 2021 but despite being called a second Independence Day, may not be known to all.

"Juneteenth marks our country's second Independence Day. Although it has long been celebrated in the African American community, this monumental event remains largely unknown to most Americans," according to nmaahc.si.edu, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture's website.

Celebrations took place as a tradition first in Texas then spread nationwide.

"Following the end of the Civil War, Juneteenth celebrations emerged as a tradition among formerly enslaved individuals and their families. These celebrations initially took place in Texas but spread to other states where Black communities resided," according to capitolhistory.org, a website for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society (USCHS), founded in 1962, which has "proudly worked to preserve and share the history of the Capitol, the Congress, and the people who work therein."

Approximately one quarter of a million people were enslaved in the state of Texas when the official announcement of their freedom was shared that first June 19.

"On June 19, 1865, about 250,000 humans were still held in slavery in Texas. On that day, Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, to announce all slaves were free," according to bpl.org, the Boston Public Library's website out of Boston, Mass.

Celebrate fathers lasting impact, presence for kids

Day created by Civil War veteran's daughter to honor her dad who raised six alone

By Alexi Knott
Staff Writer COMMENTARY



NATIONAL HOLIDAY AS OF 1972 To all the fathers around the world — thank you for your love, strength and guidance. Happy Father's Day Sunday, June 21, 2026! Image from Google

Every June, families across the United States celebrate Father's Day, a holiday dedicated to honoring fathers and father figures for their support, guidance and presence in their children's lives, but it was one woman who began it all.

The holiday was inspired by Sonora Smart Dodd, who wanted to honor her father, a Civil War veteran, who raised six children after her mother (his wife) died in childbirth in 1898, according to encyclopediaof arkansas.net/entries/sonora-louise-smart-dodd-2762/, the Encyclopedia of Arkansas site with facts about the state.

Father's Day celebrations began in the early 1900s, and it was officially recognized as a national holiday in 1972. The day was created to appreciate fathers and highlight their important role in families and society through love, responsibility and support.

"A father is someone you look up to no matter how tall you grow," according to Hallmark, reflecting the lasting influence fathers have on their children. Over time, Father's Day has grown into a widely celebrated tradition with both emotional and cultural meaning.

Many families celebrate by spending time together; that could mean sharing a meal, giving gifts, or simply showing appreciation.

Today, the meaning of Father's Day continues to evolve while keeping its original purpose.

"Fatherhood is one of the most important roles a man can have, shaping future generations, through love and guidance," as noted by National Today, which tracks calendar holidays and moments, emphasizing the long term impact fathers have on their families.

Father's Day remains an important reminder to recognize fathers and father figures who make a difference every day, whether through big celebrations or simple moments. The holiday highlights the value of family and connections.

Dad's day not in June worldwide

Australia, New Zealand favor Father's Day in September

By Shirlyn Castillo
Staff Writer

Father's Day is a national holiday every third Sunday in June to celebrate all the fathers by giving them gifts or even just having lunch with them June 21, 2026.

Although it may seem like Father's Day has always been around… it hasn't, and only received a proclamation in 1966.

"It took until 1966 for President Lyndon Johnson to make a nationwide proclamation endorsing Father's Day across the country," according to Mentalfloss.com, a website that empowers the curious by making knowledge feel surprising and delightful.

Did you know Father's Day is celebrated on different days around the world?

"In the United States, it is observed on the third Sunday in June. However, other countries have their own designated dates for celebrating fathers, such as the first Sunday in September in Australia and New Zealand," according to Bienvenuehouston.com, by owners Brandon and Nicole White.

Wonder how to celebrate your father or a father figure? Here are some ways people like to celebrate their fathers.



NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES Father's Day this year lands on Sunday, June 21, 2026 since it is annually celebrated on the third Sunday in June. Did you know how many deals go on for Father's Day? Of course, you can always make a card, drawing, homemade gift, or call, visit or plan an outing, too! Image from indianexpress.com

"Children often make cards, drawings, or homemade gifts for their fathers or father figures. Adults may call, visit or plan a family outing," according to timeanddate.com, a website that is the world's top-ranking website for time and time zones and holidays.

Here are some ideas for free or inexpensive ways to honor Dad, according to Jamie Cattanach from thepennyhoarder.com, a personal finance brand founded in 2010.

1. Shoot Some Hoops (or kick a soccer ball, etc.)
2. Play a Board Game
3. Make His Favorite Meal (if you have ingredients)
4. De-Mystify Technology
5. Watch His Favorite Movie
6. Watch the Game
7. Fire Up the Barbecue
8. Mow the Lawn
9. Do Some Yardwork (or housework or a chore)
10. Organize His Toolbox (unless he prefers it his way!)

Summer solstice June 21 nears

Marks day sun stays out longest

By Aiden Robinson
Staff Writer

The summer solstice, observed every year around June 21 by communities worldwide, is the longest day of the year caused by the Earth's tilt toward the sun, and it's been celebrated for thousands of years through festivals, bonfires and ceremonies.

Once a year, the sun stays out longer than any other day, and for thousands of years, people have never let it go unnoticed.

"The summer solstice is the longest day of the year and the shortest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. It happens every June, based on the Earth's orbit around the sun, and marks the start of summer. Humans might have observed the summer solstice as early as the Stone Age. Cultures around the world still celebrate the day with feasts, bonfires, picnics and songs," according to history.com from the A&E TV Networks.

If people have been paying attention to the solstice since the Stone Age, how did ancient civilizations actually celebrate it?

"Ancient civilizations recognized this event as a time of great importance, marking the transition from planting to growing season, as well as a time to celebrate the vitality and abundance of nature. In Ancient Egypt, the summer solstice heralded in the new year and the annual flooding of the Nile River, a critical event for agriculture," according to eugeneparksfoundation.org, a nonprofit dedicated to celebrating community, nature and environmental education.



FUN FACT In some parts of Alaska, the sun doesn't set at all during the summer solstice, giving them a full 24 hours of daylight. Image by Annie Zak via adn.com

That kind of connection to the sun didn't just disappear over time. It stuck around and shaped how people still celebrate today.

"The summer solstice…marks the moment when the North Pole is angled more toward the sun than on any other day of the year, resulting in the longest period of sunlight for the top half of the planet. Some countries plan for this prolonged sunlight with events that last through the night," according to nationalgeographic.com, a source for science, exploration and culture.

Whether it's through bonfires, festivals or just enjoying the extra sunlight, summer solstice is more than just a long day. It's a tradition people around the world have kept alive for centuries.

Latin lends itself to meaning of solstice: sun+stop

By Jacob Barbera
Staff Writer

COMMENTARY

The summer solstice is the longest day of the summer in the northern hemisphere, when the Earth's axial tilt is at its maximum; the farther north you are, the longer the day is Sunday, June 21, 2026.

"The word 'solstice.' comes from the Latin words 'sol' for sun and 'stitium,' which can mean 'pause' or 'stop.' The solstice is the end of the sun's annual march higher in the sky, when it makes its longest, highest arc. The bad news for sun lovers: It then starts retreating and days will get a little shorter every day until late December," according to PBS news online, the consolidator news brand within News Hour Productions LLC, a nonprofit subsidiary.

In addition to the word 'solstice,' what does 'summer solstice ' describe?

"The summer solstice occurs in June in the Northern Hemisphere and marks midsummer: the 'longest day' and 'shortest night' of the year. On this day, the number of hours of daylight are at their maximum, while the number of hours of night are at their minimum. However, while most people consider the summer solstice to be a day, it is in reality an exact moment in time that falls upon that day. This moment comes when whichever hemisphere you're in is most tilted towards the Sun," according to rmg.co.uk, the website for The Royal Museums Greenwich, dedicated to people's understanding of the sea, space exploration, and Britain's role in world history.

With all this tilt madness, what's with the seasons? Those are called equinoxes!

"We all know that the Earth makes a complete revolution around the sun once every 365 days, following an orbit that is elliptical in shape. This means that the distance between the Earth and Sun, which is 93 million miles on average, varies throughout the year. Seasons are caused by the fact that the Earth is tilted on its axis by 23.5°. These events are referred to as equinoxes and occur near March 21st (Vernal Equinox) and near September 22nd (Autumnal Equinox)," according to weather.gov, which provides weather, water and climate data, forecasts, warnings, and impact-based decision support services for the protection of life and property and enhancement of the national economy.

MOTHER EARTH = MOTHER NATURE
If it is alright, let us thank Earth for giving us the chance to walk among each other, to give us life, love, the ability to disagree, and the summer solstice!
Image from earth.com



Summer arrives June 21; avoid "summer melt"

Have fun but ensure you thrive (read!), keep routines

By Arielle Henry and Josiah Brown
Staff Writers



SUMMER ACTIVITIES One of the best ways you can avoid the "summer melt," or losing your level of reading skills, according to a Harvard University lecturer, is to keep reading during June, July and August. Image from community.atlassian.com

Families and teens head to beaches and parks as school ends because of warm weather and now people have more free time, travel, get summer jobs, and spend life outdoors which makes June through August one of the busiest seasons. While the first official day of summer 2026 is Sunday, June 21, in kids' eyes summer starts as soon as that final bell rings, with the last official day of school being Thursday, June 18, 2026.

"In meteorology, summer begins on June 1. And every schoolchild knows summer starts when the last school bell of the year rings," according to earthsky.org, a popular science news website.

While school ends, reading is still important because it helps students continue learning and prevents them from losing reading skills during the summer break.

"For most children, (summer reading) becomes summer homework and for parents it becomes something to fuss about over the summer," according to senior lecturer Pamela Mason. "With summer reading, the explicit problem we're trying to solve is summer melt, keeping learners reading over the summer so they at least maintain their level of reading skill. But we all know motivation is so key," according to harvard.edu, the website for Harvard University's Graduate School of Education.

While people look for fun and adventure, it's also key to create summer routines even with rest and recreation so you're ready for fall routines.

"Summer is often seen as a time for freedom, fun and a break from the rigid structure of the school year. While it's important for children to enjoy rest and recreation, completely abandoning routines can lead to challenges that affect their well-being, development, and even their return to school in the fall. Establishing a flexible but consistent summer routine can help children thrive during the break," according to pennfoundation.org, a nonprofit organization and website for St. Luke's Penn Foundation, whose mission is "to instill hope, inspire change, and build community."

Support local movie theaters

By London Antrim
Staff Writer COMMENTARY

When was the last time you went to the movies with friends or family? Across the country, many movie theaters have been going out of business due to streaming services giving access to movies at home, along with people being used to staying home after the 2020 pandemic. Movie theaters were extremely popular and a fun thing to do when going out with loved ones, and they should be supported.

“Entertainment evolves with society, but lately, movie theaters have struggled. Hollywood wonders why. The causes are complex and signal shifts in the film industry,” according to usmfreepress.org, the University of Southern Maine's school newspaper titled *The Free Press*.

Despite new, anticipated movies that have been released, people still continue to choose the convenience of watching films at home. This all started with the COVID-19 pandemic when people were always stuck at home, and they eventually became more comfortable watching movies at home instead of going out for them.

“The coronavirus’s effects on many theatres closed them down for several months, with many not able to recover,” according to thenewsfeednrv.com, a website for a local newspaper based in Virginia.

The effects of the pandemic have lasted for the past few years, drastically changing social aspects of everyone’s lives as well as how much they go out. 2020 had a massive impact on the film industry with increased dependency on



APPLE CINEMAS AT BRASS MILL MALL A mall and movie theater that was once so popular… until it was not. Photo from Facebook.com

at-home streaming services, seen as more convenient than going out to see a movie, and has been the main way people watch and purchase movies/entertainment.

“With the rise of streaming and cheap, widescreen LEDs, movies are more accessible than ever to the general public,” according to darrellowens.substack.com, a website dedicated to a personal newsletter.

All of these issues have caused many theatres to go out of business, especially the most profitable movie theatre chain nationwide, AMC Theatres.

“AMC Theatres, which has nine venues in Connecticut, plans to close more locations as it continues to grapple with a sluggish post-pandemic box office,” according to patch.com, a local news site, as first reported February 2026.

Movie theaters used to be popular spots to spend time with friends and family. It was also a good way to connect with loved ones, but theaters have become neglected over time. It is important to try to take the time to support your local theaters, like the Apple Cinemas at the Brass Mill Mall, so they don’t go out of business altogether.

Kennedy Eagles at MASC Expo

By Bryan Cruz Santiago
Staff Writer COMMENTARY

18 Kennedy students in classes or Robotics Club with Technology Education teacher Dr. Perkins were invited to the MASC (Manufacturing Alliance Service Corporation) facility to attend a manufacturing expo, alongside other schools, in order to learn about opportunities and subsections of manufacturing at 173 Interstate Lane Thursday, May 14, 2026.

Upon arriving at the facility, we were given a complimentary bag and a couple papers including info of those companies present, alongside a treasure hunt which gave rewards to a random selection of those who completed it.

In groups of three, the Kennedy Robotics team would have two teams showing off the robot, while the remaining teams were allowed to walk around, explore and ask questions to the different representatives at their companies' demonstration counters.

I2 Systems is an example of the specific work one company might manufacture, as they focused on advanced LED lighting found in places like Walmart, automated robots, elevators, and PC boards. This was a common occurrence, with many of these companies working closely with well-known names like Honda, Yamaha, Supra,



AMERICAN MURAL PROJECT Was showing off the connection between art and manufacturing at the Manufacturing Careers Roadshow with images. Photo from www.americanmuralproject.org

Kawasaki, Fruit of the Loom, Cohort, aircraft, and military vehicles.

Morin by Kingspan had 100+ options for architectural metal panels sold commercially, being found in places like sports stadiums and working towards being environmentally friendly.

There was a good amount of variability for future career paths, with some companies not focusing on producing things themselves.

Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology representatives told of their work as a non profit which helped aid other companies with attaining machines, company direction, and giving grants for manufacturing research and development.

Once things began to slow down, students regrouped and prepared the robot for the trip back, with chaperones Dr. Perkins and Paraprofessional Ms. Cosme helping keep track of students and aiding in the small debrief afterward, arriving just in time for fourth period.

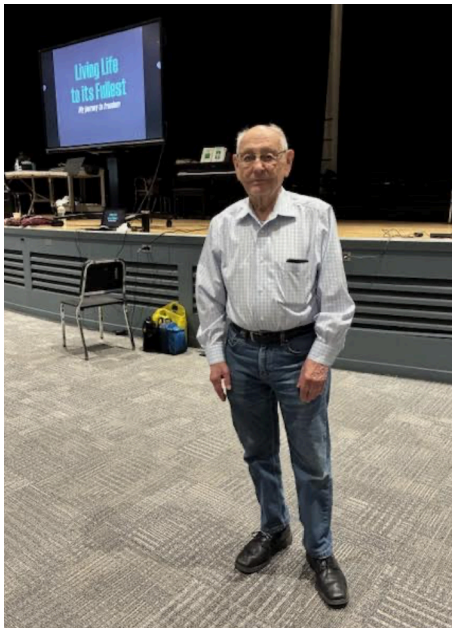
Survivor shares Holocaust story

By London Antrim
Staff Writer

Endre (Andy) Sarkany is an 89-year-old Holocaust survivor who visited Kennedy to share his intense, inspirational experience and childhood memories Tuesday, May 19, 2026 in the auditorium.

At the start of the Holocaust he was in kindergarten. He escaped after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Sarkany has now spent the past 15 years taking the time to come and speak at school, libraries, memorials, and public groups to educate on the occurrences of the Holocaust and to share his personal experience. He does about 75 presentations per year. He has been married for almost 56 years with two children and five grandchildren. He attended graduate school, earning a degree in mathematics and physics, for which he expressed his pride.

Sarkany started off his presentation by explaining his history and personal life as well as his Hungarian heritage. He explained how at the time of the Holocaust many countries around Hungary were a part of its territory like Slovakia, Romania, Austria, Slovenia and more. He urged students to have a voice: “You cannot be a procrastinator, you're only hurting yourself and the people around you. Speak up!” said Serkany after giving a brief overview on the beginning of the Holocaust.



ENDRE SARKANY VISITS Holocaust survivor Sarkany shared his experience with students during Period 2A Tuesday, May 19, 2026 in the auditorium. Photo by Dr. Cybart-Persenaire

He then showed a poem titled “The Bystander” and explained the significance and how it relates to the Holocaust and connects to him.

“You cannot be a bystander in your life, be an outstander instead,” said Serkany, explaining how people became bystanders during the Holocaust by not speaking up for what was right and wrong. He continued to emphasize how something like this should never be repeated.

Serkany provided resources to learn more about the Holocaust and to be educated on how devastating this time was, and recommended the book *Night* by Eli Wiesel. He shared a quote from it which said, “Whoever listens to a witness, becomes witness,” which he connected to his point to avoid be-

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coming a bystander.

"Jews have to say never again and never forget, those who fail to understand history are doomed to repeat it," said Sarkany emotionally as he started to speak about the history of Adolf Hitler. "Human beings didn't mean anything to him."

He described the motivation behind the Holocaust and what that manifested into, then showed a picture of Nazi soldiers in his hometown of Budapest wearing the swastika and the meaning behind it.

"The swastika is defined by me in two words, hate and killing; hate only means evil and cruel," Sarkany said emotionally. He kept repeating throughout his presentation how the word hate should not be used because of the harm and cruelty it is connected to.

He expressed how he wished this word wouldn't be used so frequently because it can lead to extreme cruelty like what happened in the Holocaust.

"I would like you all to replace that word or cruelty with two other words, love and hope; they are the only ones that will matter through your whole life," he said.

Sarkany then spoke more in depth about his personal life during the Holocaust. He was only in kindergarten at the start and was ridiculed constantly for his faith. He showed the audience a picture of a building he said was his school in Budapest which he says was the only reason he survived before his parents took him out of school and got taken to concentration camps.

"I am a very, very proud Jew, I always have and always will be until I die. Be proud of your heritage," he said, then spoke about the SS Invasion of Hungary in 1944 which he said changed his life forever when his parents were taken for slave labor.

"Practically every business in Germany used Jews as slave labor," he said.

Sarkany showed a picture taken August 11, 2017 of people marching with swastikas and confederate flags and said how disappointed he felt by seeing this.

"People holding Hitler's symbol of evil… I was devastated by this antisemitism and white supremacy that exists today," he said. He then showed a picture from Jan. 6, 2021 of people storming the Capitol of the United States and the White House.

"These white supremacists wanted to take away the right you and I have, freedom," he said.

Endre Sarkany told many stories about his traumatic experiences during the Holocaust as well as his inspirational opinions about it. He encourages everyone to educate themselves and to not be hateful towards anyone so these actions are never repeated.

Met Gala origins

JFK's wife served as co-chair for this May fashion event

By Daurelys R-N
Staff Writer

The Met Gala in New York began as a midnight dinner, hosted by Eleanor Lambert at the Waldorf Astoria, that cost $50 to attend as a way to fundraise for the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute's expenses and to celebrate the opening of its annual exhibit in December 1948, leading to the star-studded, $100,000 per ticket extravaganza held Monday, May 4, 2026.

The Met Gala eventually became a themed fashion event headed by designer Diana Vreeland.

"The first themed Met Gala was the 1973 Cristóbal Balenciaga retrospective. Notable themes in the Vreeland era include a Russian -themed costume exhibit … — and an old Hollywood theme—for which the singer Cher dressed head to toe in fringe," according to news.inbox.eu/14wkzlq-the-History-behind-the-Met-gala, a privacy-focused email service providing secure, ad-free email and cloud storage.

Thanks to Vreeland, there's even a connection to Kennedy High School's namesake and his wife!

"Vreeland is known for getting more celebrities involved in the event, like First Lady Jackie Kennedy, who served as a co-chair from 1977 to 1978," according to news.inbox.eu/14wkzlq-the-history-behind-the-met-gala



ELEANOR LAMBERT, MET GALA FOUNDER
Lambert was a fashion publicist who turned a fundraiser into one of the world's biggest fashion and cultural events, held in 2026 Monday, May 4. Image from Vogue Arabia

You may be curious if the Met Gala is still used as a fundraiser.

"The Met Gala is still an event that uses its money to fund organizations by donation. (It) happens yearly and celebrates different industries by having music artists, actors, influencers and more wear clothing by known and upcoming designers," according to fruitanews.org/5073/stories/history-of-the-met-gala, also known as The Catalyst, a site with a community journalism focus.

The Met Gala grew into a major cultural event that blends fashion, art and celebrity influence.

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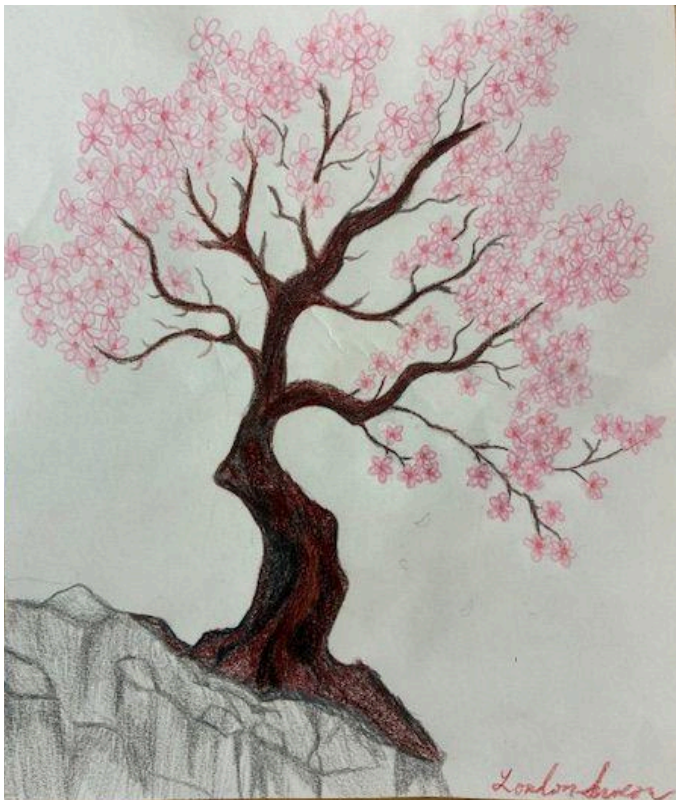
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"In 1995 Anna Wintour—editor-in-chief of Vogue, and a Met Trustee—took over as co-chair and has overseen the party ever since. Wintour has built the event into one of the most visible and successful fundraisers in the world, drawing guests from the worlds of fashion, film, society, sports, business, and music," according to metmuseum.org/perspectives/met-gala-costume-institute, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's website.



JACQUELINE 'JACKIE' KENNEDY ONASSIS
This photograph of Jackie shows her making an appearance at the 1979 Met Gala wearing Valentino. In 2026, the event was held Monday, May 4 and still continues to be a fundraiser for the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Image from businessinsider.com

Enjoy Spring!



SUMMER STARTS JUNE 21
Since the first official day of summer is said to be June 21, 2026, enjoy the spring days of May while you can. Appreciate nature, especially some of the different blossoming trees like the one drawn above that are found in the school's inner courtyard.
Artwork by London Antrim

Help protect environment for June 5 event

By Favour Agboola
Staff Writer



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY is celebrated annually June 5 to promote global awareness and action for protecting the environment. Image from Google

Led by the United Nations and held annually June 5, World Environment Day is the largest global event for environmental action, empowering people to tackle climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss through activities like tree planting, beach cleanups, and sustainable living.

“For decades, the world has heard the climate story—warnings, targets, distant deadlines. Too often, the response has been clouded by noise: delay, distraction, denial,” according to worldenvironmentday.global, a website that is under the United Nations Environment Programme.

Did you know the planet doesn’t argue? It doesn’t negotiate. It sends signals: rising seas, raging wildfires, heatwaves, melting glaciers.

“Recent years have seen nations working closer than ever to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature loss and pollution and waste. The UN Climate Change Conference COP28 saw countries agree to new commitments on renewable energy, efficiency, and methane amongst others, and also signify the end of the fossil fuel era,” according to news.un.com, a website that gives a global perspective on human stories.

“Each year, this event features a unique theme that addresses specific environmental concerns, ranging from biodiversity to the management of toxic chemicals. The themes often guide the activities and initiatives undertaken by various nations, … based on collaborative arrangements between the UN and participating countries,” according to ebsco.com, a website that provides library technology, and clinical decision solutions.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that the average American produces about 4.9 pounds (2.2 kg) of municipal solid waste every single day.

“The UN calls World Environment Day ‘the biggest day for positive environmental action.’ It is a day for public outreach as well as personal responsibility — an ‘opportunity to care for the Earth and become agents of change,’ ” according to education.nationalgeographic.org, a website that provides news that impacts and makes a change to the society and community.

World Cup 2026: biggest event yet

By Evan Delfino
Staff Writer

The World Cup is the biggest tournament for soccer in the world, having started in 1930 because of the lack of international tournaments for professional players, and soon it will be hosted in America, Canada and Mexico, beginning June 11 and going until July 19, 2026.

"The major international football tournament was the Olympic one, first played in 1900. However, at the time, only for amateur athletes… FIFA decided in 1929 to organize the first World Cup in 1930, open to professional players," according to hypercritic.org, a website from the European Cultural Foundation.

Did you know that the World Cup has actually been cancelled before, and this happened not just once, but twice?

"The tournament itself has only been cancelled twice… it was due to World War II, with both the 1942 and 1946 editions being abandoned," according to mirror.co.uk, one of Britain's most trusted news brands.

Why is the World Cup always held in the summer every four years?



WHO HAS THE MOST TROPHIES? Brazil holds the record for the most men's World Cup wins, with five titles (1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002), while Italy and Germany are tied for second place with four. The photo above shows the World Cup trophy. Image from courier-journal.com and image below from ussoccer.com

"The FIFA World Cup is traditionally held in the Northern Hemisphere summer, typically in June and July; this timing allows for favorable weather conditions," according to southernpigskin.com, a leading name in southern college football coverage which also covers other sports like soccer.

This year the World Cup will be hosted in three countries: the United States, Canada and Mexico. Matches will take place in 16 cities, and within America, matches will be in 11 different cities.



Annual Football Awards Night shares success

By Christopher M. Sarlo
Varsity Football Head Coach COMMENTARY

The Annual Football Awards Night celebrated student athletes in the football program, plus introduced a $250 scholarship award given in memory of a team supporter who passed away this season. The event was held in the cafeteria Monday, March 9, 2026 from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.



IRON EAGLES AWARD This picture shows (from left to right) Luis Rivera, Jerale Blizzard, Kanaan Rosario, Vagner Soares, and Tyler Thomas. This is always the first of our awards presented because in football, the Offensive linemen are critical to the overall success of a team. They do all the 'dirty' work and get very little recognition for it. In the pros, QB's take care of their linemen with gifts and dinners, etc., because those guys keep the high profile QB, like Tom Brady, safe and secure. The plaque recognizes all of these players and is made of oak, one of the hardest woods, symbolizing their hard work. It's not gold and flashy, but simply burned into the wooden plaque, a reflection of the hardly-recognized and understated status of what they do.



INAUGURAL DARREN A. SPRIGGS AWARD This year we recognize senior player Luis Rivera with the inaugural Darren A. Spriggs Award. Spriggs was EJ McCollum's stepfather and passed away unexpectedly this fall. EJ's family wanted to set this up with a $250 scholarship for a player who has committed to the football program. Spriggs was a huge sports fan and loved that EJ came out to play this year. This was EJ's first and only year with the football team. EJ and Luis were fellow linemen who worked and supported each other in the 'trenches.' EJ presented the award to Luis at our event.



CAPTAIN POSTER This picture shows Vagner Soares, a captain during the 2025 season, with the poster given as a gift to senior captains each year.
All photos by Dante Sarlo

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FELLOW CAPTAIN This picture shows Jaydon Lopez, a captain during the 2023-2025 seasons, with the poster given as a gift to senior captains each year.



CHARACTER AWARD This picture shows EJ McCollum receiving the Brandon Burlsworth Character Award. The Burlsworth Foundation was formed after the tragic death of Brandon Burlsworth, a student-athlete who many consider the greatest walk-on in college football history. He was drafted by the Indianapolis Colts, but died in a car accident before the start of the regular season. The foundation creates the formal certificate and gives a copy of the book and movie created to tell his story. EJ only played one season for us and would be considered a 'walk-on.' He has tremendous character and thus is very deserving of this award.



RUDY AWARD This picture shows Hillel Desamour, a junior captain during the 2025 season, with the Dariel Perez Memorial Award. The 'RUDY' is named in honor of Dariel 'Rudy' Perez, Class of '11, who died in a car accident while attending college. This award recognizes what Rudy was all about: hustle, heart, 110 percent effort all the time. He was small in stature, but had the heart of a giant. He earned the nickname from a coach who believed he modeled the status of the Notre Dame player, Rudy Ruettiger.

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ROCK AWARD This picture shows Vagner Soares, a captain during the 2025 season, with the 'ROCK.' It's the equivalent of the Heisman Trophy in NCAA football. It is awarded to the player who exemplifies the principles of the Foundation of Kennedy Football. It is formally known as the Stephen Rockwell Memorial Award in honor of Steve, the 'Rock,' Rockwell, a Kennedy football player and alum, Class of '82. He was a great friend of the Sarlo family and died in a motorcycle accident in the fall of 1988.

For more information on these awards, and to learn more about the program, visit jfkeaglesfootball.com.

The following football players earned post season honors for the 2025 Fall season:

ALL-NVL 1st Team Defense

FS-Jaydon Lopez, Class of '26

ALL-NVL 2nd Team Defense

LB-Oscar Vargas, Class of '27/ ALL-NVL Honorable Mention

All-City Team

1st and 2nd Team ALL-NVL are automatic selections to the All-City Team

FB-Sebastian Elizalde, Class of '26

2025 Mambruno Award Winner

Awarded to the top senior football player in the city:

QB/FS-Jaydon Lopez, Class of '26

Special thank you for memorial award

By Luis Rivera

I take this very seriously because of the memorial award (Darren A. Spriggs Award) that I received the night of the football banquet. Other awards were also given out, and I just wanted to also congratulate my football teammates but I was very honored to receive the award that I got. As a senior graduating, I wish well to the team and also to whoever receives the award next. I'm very proud of my commitment and especially as a senior on the football team, I hope I left a good way on how to do things and how things should be done. I hope I was able to give a good example.

Staff will visit Quassy, Jamaica; enjoy family time

By Corissa Hunter
Staff Writer

Your summer plans?

Some Kennedy staff members work all summer, are getting ready for the new school year, will visit family, or go on vacation once Thursday, June 18, the last day of school arrives, they revealed when interviewed in late April 2026.

Administrative Associate Ms. Williams in the main office said she will continue working as a makeup artist while doing photoshoots, events and more.

Not only that, but she will be working at Kennedy throughout the summer to get ready for the next school year. When she is not working, she will be with her family, enjoying time together, she said.

This summer, school counselor Mrs. Stellmach is going to travel to visit both of her sons, and she also plans on swimming at Lake Quassapaug in Middlebury, she said.

English teacher Ms. Doyle has an older sister getting married, so she will be in upstate New York. Then, towards the end of July, she will be going to another wedding in Virginia, along with reading more books.

Math teacher Mrs. Calabro will be getting a



SUMMER PLANS What are your plans after June 18, 2026, school's last day? Image from Amazon.com

a new puppy, she said.

Hall monitor Mr. Palmer plans on flying out to Jamaica with his wife for a short period of time. Eventually, he will be celebrating his grandson's 7th birthday August 25.

Math teacher Ms. Benton (former Eagle Flyer journalist!) will be celebrating her birthday with her twin sister (both Kennedy graduates!) July 12. Additionally, she will be having a small family gathering.

Special Education teacher Ms. Gaynes will not work this summer. She decided to spend time with her two sons, enjoying time off. In August, she and her family will take a cruise to Alaska plus celebrate her sons' birthdays.

10-day space mission deemed “rousing success”

Artemis II Mission crew returns back safely

By Isabella Martin
Staff Writer

NASA’s (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Artemis II Mission crew set out to space from Kennedy Space Center in Florida, using the SLS (Space Launch System), researching important life support systems and other various practices, Wednesday, April 1, 2026 and returned Saturday, April 11, 2026.

Why did NASA send out a space crew for just 10 days?

“Well, the answer to that question is to do research on crucial life-support systems, such as the Orion Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS),” according to nasa.gov, the official website for the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

How much do you know about the crew?

The four crew members: Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Khristina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen, embarked on their journey around the moon and safely returned, but prior to going, they were required to undergo tests.



ARTEMIS II CREW This photo shows the crew before their takeoff into space April 1, 2026. The man sitting is Reid Wiseman, a 50-years young (commander) NASA astronaut. To the left of Wiseman is Victor Glover, a 50-years young (pilot) NASA astronaut and the first person of color to travel to the moon. Next to Glover is Jeremy Hansen, a 50-years young (mission specialist) CSA (Canadian Space Agency) astronaut and the first non-U.S. citizen to travel to the moon. Beside him is Christina Koch, 47-years young (mission specialist) NASA astronaut, and the first woman to travel to the moon. Photo from abcnews.com

The crew needed to take some tests and provide samples of blood and saliva to figure out their eligibility for the mission.

“Some other tests the crew ran consisted of manual flying, navigation, and suit evaluations, alongside health and immune system research, by providing blood, urine, and a saliva sample to track their nutritional,

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cardiovascular, and immune functions, including testing how dormant viruses react to deep-space," according to nasa.gov, NASA's official website.

Some people aren't aware of where the shuttle was launched from the launch pad.

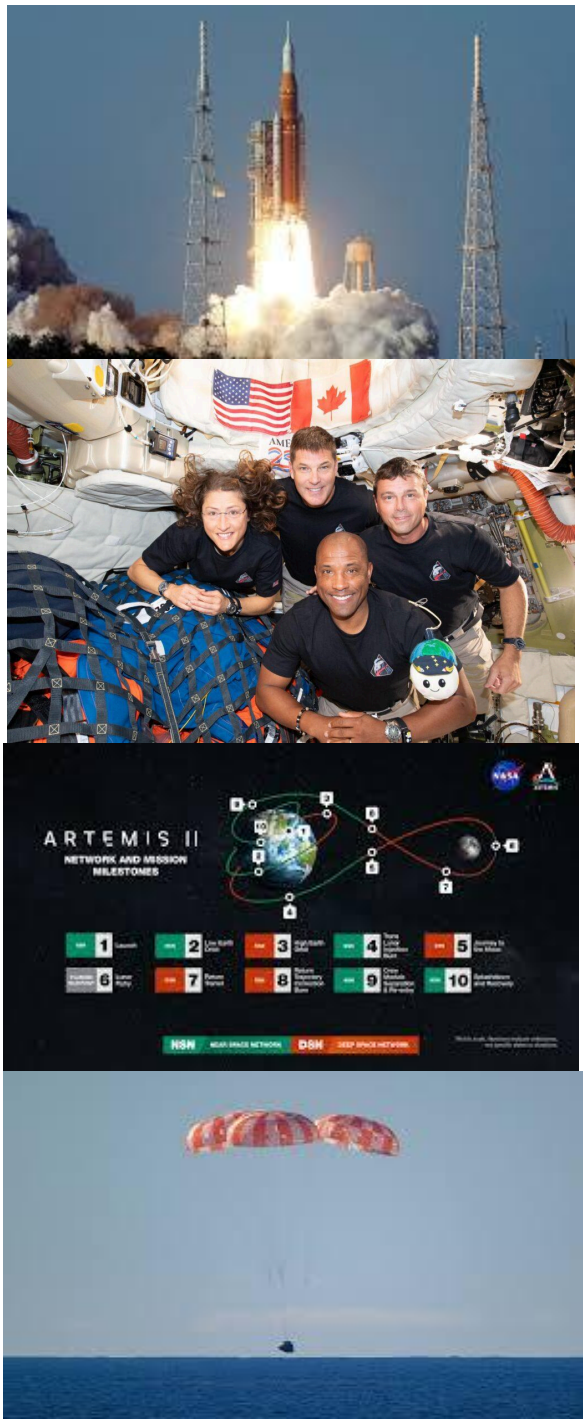
"The Artemis II shuttle was launched from Kennedy Space Center in (Cape Canaveral) Florida, from launch pad 39B, which NASA has owned since 1962," according to nps.gov, the official website for providing information on park regulations, trip planning, and conservation.

This mission caught the attention of the world.

"The four Artemis II astronauts splashed down off the coast of San Diego this evening (April 10), wrapping up an epic mission that broke spaceflight records, caught the attention of the world and set the stage for even more ambitious moonshots to come," according to space.com, a website that provides sources of space exploration.

Incoming splash from the crew!

"Last Friday evening, NASA's Artemis II mission came to an exciting end as the Orion spacecraft splashed down safely in the Pacific Ocean. The mission marked the first time in 53 years that astronauts have traveled around the moon. Its success brings NASA one step closer to its goal of sending humans to the moon again," according to newsforkids.net, a website whose goal is to create a site to present news.



MISSION SUCCESS The Artemis II space crew (seen in the photo second from the top) splashes down safely after 10 days in space. The top photo is from timesofisrael.com, the second photo from cl.usembassy.gov, the third photo is from nasa.gov, and the last photo is from newsforkids.net

JUNE SCRAMBLED! *By Autumn Bohlman*

Unscramble these five words/phrases related to articles in this issue, and tell us on which page the word or phrase appears.

MRNIEOTVENN

HTSREFA YDA

LODWR PUC

EUHNTNETEJ

LGAF AYD

Email answers to acybart-persenaire@waterbury.k12.ct.us

First to email receives a $5 Dunkin Donuts gift card. Separate prizes given for students and staff.



Vincent Van Gogh, 'The Starry Night,' June 1889, Saint Remy.

Walk to End Alzheimer’s

By Autumn Bohlman
Staff Writer

In honor of Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month in June, the ‘Walk to End Alzheimer’s’ is held each year, often occurring in the fall, to help raise money and awareness for research and support to help end Alzheimer's or #ENDALZ.

“Alzheimer’s is the most common cause of dementia and affects over 7 million Americans — a number expected to rise sharply in the coming years. By walking, you help bring much-needed attention to a disease that often remains misunderstood and under-discussed,” according to alzalaskablog.org, a nonprofit website for the Alzheimer’s Association that shares local stories of survivors and family of those who have passed away.

Do you have to pay to join?

“While there is no fee to register for Walk, all participants are encouraged to raise critical funds that allow the Alzheimer’s Association to provide 24/7 care and support and advance research toward methods of prevention, treatment and, ultimately, a cure,” according to act.alz.org, a leading voluntary health organization website in Alzheimer’s care, to support and research the elimination of Alzheimer's disease.

What does each flower distributed at these events signify?

“Blue: Someone living with Alzheimer’s or another dementia.
Purple: An individual who has lost someone to the disease.



TAKEN AT THE METLIFE STADIUM IN HARTFORD, CONN. The flowers seen above were placed to create a promise garden, each color signifying a support system. In honor of Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month in June, consider supporting the #ENDALZ by joining in on walks, typically held in the fall. Go to act.alz.org for more information on walks near you. Photo by A. Bohlman

Yellow: A person currently supporting or caring for someone with Alzheimer’s.
Orange: A participant who supports the cause and the Association’s vision of a world without Alzheimer’s and other dementia,” according to alz.org, a website supported by the Alzheimer's Association to research its elimination.

How do the flowers signify the disease?

“Together, the colors of the Promise Garden Flowers signify our solidarity in the fight against the disease. We walk for families facing the disease today. We walk for advancements in treatment. We walk for the next generation. We walk for a future world without Alzheimer’s disease and other dementia,” according to alz.org.