

# Syosset Pride

*A Publication of the Syosset Central School District*

[www.syossetschools.org](http://www.syossetschools.org)

Richie Prestegaard



Alexis Shore



## Renaissance Kids:

### How Syosset Fosters Well-Rounded Students for the 21st Century

In a 2011 article for CNN Moneywatch, Jeff Haden writes, "None of us is one thing. All of us possess a variety of skills, including skills we aren't using. And no matter how successful we are in one area, all of us still have other skills we would like to develop."

The article goes on to lament the fact that many people often look incredulously upon someone who claims to be, for example, a photographer and an accountant. There seems to be more of an emphasis on "getting good at one thing."

That counts out Leonardo da Vinci. The man perhaps most famous for painting the Mona Lisa was also a mathematician, a geologist, an inventor, a writer, an engineer and an architect. He is considered the original model of the term "Renaissance man," a phrase used to describe a person who studies

the world across multiple disciplines.

At Syosset, we have many students who fit that very category. A school's breadth of programs and clubs is only as strong as the students who actually take advantage of them.

Recently, the World Language Program Committee released a

Here are three students at Syosset who are exemplifying that "Renaissance Kid" spirit.

#### Richie Prestegaard – Sports, Student Government and Music

You might recognize senior Richie Prestegaard from when he was helping his teammates capture

Syosset's first-ever Long Island Championship in football this past fall, but the gridiron is just one area where Prestegaard focuses his interests.

The Senate vice president in student government is also a member of the National

Honor Society and plays tenor saxophone for the symphonic band.

"I always knew when it came to my education that I wanted to take a well-rounded approach," Prestegaard said. "I was very fortunate because at a young age, I was surrounded by great people who saw my personality and told me which opportunities I might like to get involved with. And once you get involved in one thing, it's easy to get

**"There is a place for you in Syosset. At Syosset, there are tons of kids doing multiple things at once."**

staggering statistic: 76 percent of Syosset High School seniors are still enrolled in at least one foreign language course despite having long ago met the state's requirements for graduation.

It all starts at the elementary schools, building a foundation of continued inquiry and developing well-rounded students who, by the time they reach the high school, have grown accustomed to getting good at more than one thing. Need some examples?

**Continued on page 3**

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# A Message from Your *Superintendent*

To the Syosset Community,

Long Island is proud of its long literary and artistic tradition and, in particular, native son Walt Whitman for whom one of our elementary schools is named. In Whitman's famous poem, "Song of Myself," he speaks to the dichotomies he finds within himself. His line, "I am large, I contain multitudes," has for me evoked the idea that no one is unidimensional, so we cannot (or at least should not) constrain others through stereotypes that pigeonhole them into narrow categories.

As I've grown to know Syosset's programs and, more importantly, its students, I've seldom seen a child who fits a neat label – athlete, band kid, brainiac. On the contrary, if there's any stereotype here, it's that every youngster is pursuing multiple interests and passions.

In large measure, that's because we don't just nurture students' strengths, we broaden their horizons. A strong indicator is a statistic from the recent report of our World Language Committee: Seventy-six percent of high

school seniors are still enrolled in a world language, long after the state mandates have fallen away.

Our students are not only scholars or athletes or artists or thespians, they take on several or all of these identities and more. Like Whitman, our students contain multitudes – of interests, talents, skills, and accomplishments – and they defy narrow categorization. In this newsletter, we thought you'd enjoy meeting a few of these students and getting to know the breadth of their interests and accomplishments a little better.

Our school community also contains multitudes. I recently visited the South Woods Middle School multicultural expo (and won't need to eat again for a week) and was struck by the same wonder I had experienced at similar events at HBT Middle School and Syosset High School. There were cultural displays, performances, and foods from literally every corner of the globe. Whether our students' families emigrated recently or generations ago, our district reflects a wonderful cultural richness that derives from our broad diversity and ethos of marrying

cultural pride with genuine curiosity and mutual respect.

So it's wonderfully fitting that our PTA recently made the decision to celebrate and nurture this diversity by establishing a Cultural Unity Committee to represent the many cultural communities within the district and work together to bridge and support cultural differences.

Later in "Song of Myself," Whitman writes, "Births have brought us richness and variety; And other births will bring us richness and variety." I think he's captured exactly our sentiment. Whitman began his career as a teacher, and from the sounds of those lines, he would no doubt have been as proud to be a part of Syosset's multitudes as I am.

Regards,  
Dr. Tom Rogers  
Superintendent of Schools



# A Message from Your *Board of Education*

To the Community,

Spring is finally in the air after what has been a very challenging winter in Syosset. First and foremost, we'd like to acknowledge the amazing job the buildings and grounds crew did over the course of the winter: clearing paths, plowing the parking lots, salting the walkways and ensuring that our students moved around campus safely. Their tireless work allowed us to get back to the business of educating students as soon as possible.

The students hardly missed a beat over the course of the winter, and we've got a lot to be proud of. Every week, we hear about our students accomplishing amazing things both inside and outside of the classroom. From fundraising efforts to successes in research, from working with opera professionals at the Met to exhibiting sportsmanship on the athletic fields, our students lead by example.

Of course, we are in the midst of budget season as well, which is both a challenging and exciting time of year. We are working diligently to ensure that students are getting a premium education while the Board makes fiscally prudent decisions.

More workshops are planned for the

future before the Board casts a final vote on the budget, but we already know that we have the benefit of lower TRS rates compared to last year, which should help us put forth a balanced budget that meets our obligation to remain under the tax cap. We also acknowledge that going forward, our facility and security needs will be assessed and will require improvements.

Our budget hearing and regular Board of Education meetings in the coming months are excellent opportunities for you to ask questions and become informed about the 2015-16 spending plan. We welcome the public to these meetings, and we look forward to keeping the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance a vital part of the budget planning process. Your Board of Education remains committed to a spirit of transparency when it comes to our fiscal operations.

This spring newsletter is a testament to the kind of results we have come to expect each and every year. Not only does our district provide myriad opportunities across the disciplines, our students take full advantage of those opportunities. As you'll see by reading on, we are creating graduating



class after graduating class of well-rounded, diverse and energetic students who are more than prepared to take on the challenges of college life and the 21st-century workforce. In the end, isn't that one of the founding principles of education? We believe we are accomplishing that mission. As you read on, we're confident that you'll agree.

Sincerely,  
The Syosset School District Board of Education

Dr. Michael Cohen  
April Neuendorf  
Chris DiFilippo  
Tracy Frankel  
Rob Gershon

Joshua Lafazan  
Susan Parker  
Dr. Alan Resnick  
Laura Schlesinger



# Renaissance Kids

Continued from page 1

involved in others.”

His academics have earned him membership not only in the National Honor Society, but also in the World Language Honor Society and designation as an AP Scholar with Honor. His musical talents earned him a spot on the winning band at the NYSSMA competition in 2013.

“Music really gets going at the elementary level, where I picked up the saxophone and had great teachers who encouraged me all the way through,” he said.

Prestegaard can now be seen running up and down the lacrosse field as a veteran defenseman for the Braves.

“There is a place for you in Syosset,” he said. “I’m very fortunate. In some other schools, if you’re a football player, that’s what you are; that’s all you are. At Syosset, there are tons of kids doing multiple things at once.”

## Alexis Shore – Journalism, Dance and Interact Club

Senior Alexis Shore said she first got involved in English and writing as a student at Walt Whitman Elementary, where she filled the pages of her writer’s notebook with short stories, journals and poems. In middle school, she joined the school newspaper. From there, she has worked her way to editor-in-chief of The Pulse, the high school newspaper.

But her strength in English didn’t pigeonhole her abilities. She is also an accomplished science research student, having participated in the Intel Science Talent Search competition and, in March, securing fourth place in the behavioral sciences category at the Long Island Science and Engineering Fair.

Her most visible presence

in the school centers on her involvement as co-president of the Interact Club, a high school version of the Rotary, which boasts more than 300 members. The club’s heavy fundraising process has relied heavily upon Shore’s developing writing, speaking and communication skills.

“My writing skills have definitely improved through Interact, as have my public speaking skills,” she said. “I’ve been forced to speak in front of large crowds and cameras. It’s really impacted me in more ways than just helping people.”

Shore has even carried her dedication and talent into the arts. Earlier this year, her skills as a dancer earned her a scholar-artist designation from the Long Island Arts Alliance, an honor bestowed upon just 20 high school students on Long Island.

“There are so many opportunities here that you can take advantage of,” Shore said. “As soon as I got here, I thought, I want to be part of the newspaper, I want to be part of Interact, I want to be part of kickline. I didn’t want to just stand in the background because there were so many opportunities to be a leader in those situations. One opportunity easily lent itself to another, and that’s how I got involved.”

## Rebecca Sobel – Art and Foreign Language

At a recent Board meeting, senior Rebecca Sobel had a fluent conversation in Spanish about literature with a fellow classmate while standing at a podium microphone. The ease with which she spoke Spanish was testament to the years she has devoted, dating back to her experience with



the World Language Program at Robbins Lane Elementary.

“I’ve had so many incredible Spanish teachers in the high school that I really developed my love for the language,” Sobel said.

That love spiraled into an opportunity to write for World Language Magazine and serve as its vice president. The magazine gathers articles written in foreign languages and is distributed to the World Language Honor Society.

But Sobel is also accomplished in the fine arts, serving as president and art editor of KEN, Syosset High School’s award-winning literary magazine. She is a member of three honor societies and is head of the Nursing Home Committee, which works closely with White Oaks Nursing Home in Woodbury to create greeting cards during holidays, as well as other art projects that have a positive impact on residents. Sobel’s artwork also contributes to the Memory Project, a portrait-painting initiative that

sends personalized portraits to underprivileged children throughout the world.

“In fourth and fifth grade, I took part in art enrichment, which involved doing art projects before school,” Sobel said, thinking back to her early development as an art student. “Then in middle school, there were a lot of different art clubs and projects I got involved in, and at the high school, there are a lot of courses – ceramics and sculpture, advanced drawing, crafts — there are so many options.”

Amidst all of this, Sobel is also a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist, is certified in CPR and is captain of the swim team.

“I feel like starting off, it was so easy to get involved in a lot of activities...There are so many interesting opportunities that I don’t want to miss out on anything,” she said.

# AROUND THE SCHOOLS

## Syosset High School

Members of the high school's chamber singers and orchestra were joined on stage in partnership with the International Vocal Arts Institute (IVAI) for a special one-time performance of "The Tragedy of Carmen."

Through the school's fine and performing arts department and its 16-year partnership with the IVAI, the students performed an abridged version of the opera in the auditorium during school hours. The IVAI is a program run through the Metropolitan Opera House that discovers and develops talented would-be opera professionals at a young age.

Solos were performed by current members of the IVAI program, while Syosset student-musicians made up the chorus and orchestra under the direction of teachers Kristen Howell and Stephanie Merten, respectively.

## H.B. Thompson

Sixth-grade students at H.B. Thompson got a hands-on lesson in DNA when they took an in-

school field trip with educators from the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory this spring.

The laboratory's middle school educator, Katie McAuley, dropped in to conduct a lab called "Glowing Genes," which involved a basic bacterial transformation from one organism to another.

The lesson reinforced the idea that DNA is a code and can be transferred from one living species to another, including fish, monkeys and mice. For the lab assignment, the students used heat shock to move DNA into the cells of a harmless bacterium living inside a petri dish.

DNA lab educators from Cold Spring Harbor have been visiting Syosset schools for a number of years to give students a glimpse of real-world applications to the science of the genetics lessons taught in textbooks.

## Syosset High School



## SOUTH WOODS

Closing out Spirit Week at South Woods, students presented a check for more than \$3,600 to the Interfaith Nutrition Network (INN), a nonprofit that helps provide food and shelter to Long Islanders in need.

In addition to the money raised during the team-building Spirit Week events, the students also filled a commercial-grade laundry bin with towels as part of a weeklong towel drive for the INN. The towels will be used to stock the INN's shelters with much-needed supplies.

Spirit Week at South Woods closed with a ceremony that presented the INN with the check and towels and was punctuated with a spirited competition among students and teachers in various relay matches. The ceremony ended with a student vs. faculty tug of war competition.

## Robbins Lane

During the month of March, second-grade Rhythm and Movement students at Robbins Lane learned Irish step dancing with traditional Celtic music under the expertise of teacher

Dr. Catherine da Silva.

The activity reinforced keeping a steady beat using both independent and partner work, and provided authentic cultural experiences.

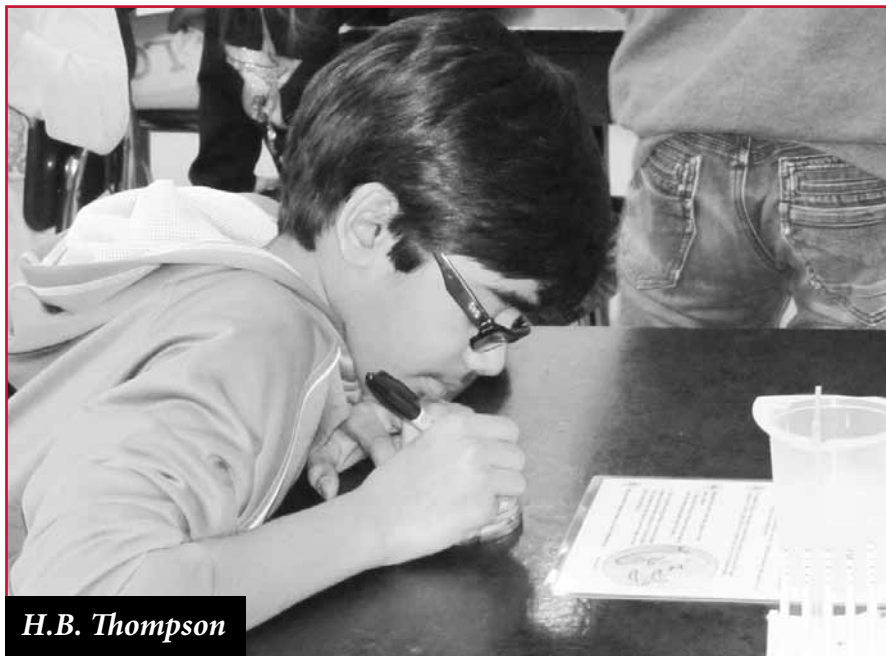
The children had the "luck o' the Irish" on their side in that they were able to utilize a new product called Sqair, which establishes spatial boundaries and helps to differentiate the right side from the left.

Sqair Fitness System was developed by Jade Ng, who visited Robbins Lane students in the beginning of March to demonstrate the uses of the product. The Sqair system cut learning time of key spatial concepts in half!

## J. Irving Baglis

During their "Writing Like a Scientist" unit, second-graders at Baglis Elementary engineered blades for wind turbines with an eye for efficiency in design.

They began by learning about renewable and nonrenewable energy sources from a multimedia presentation given by Enrichment Specialist Dr. Kat Kelly in the library. They learned about the limitations of nonrenewable resources such



H.B. Thompson



as gas, oil and coal. They also learned about the flexibility and availability of renewable resources such as wind, water and sun. The students had many reflective questions and an engaging discussion about the need for a focus on developing renewable resources to help the planet stay clean and healthy.

The second-graders then used a STEM portfolio to guide their work in groups as they designed blades for a wind turbine.

Groups worked collaboratively to design a new type of blade to test on a model wind turbine.

In the end, they learned that surface area, shape, and weight and strength of the material were all important factors in designing successful blades.

## South Grove

Kindergarten and first-grade students at South Grove participated in Read Across America Day while celebrating and honoring Dr. Seuss' birthday.

The day began with all students taking a reader's oath and singing "Happy Birthday" to beloved children's author and illustrator Theodor Seuss Geisel. Every student then dressed as a little Cat in the Hat wearing the classic red and white hat they had colored earlier in the week. The students also gave the cat a

new hat, creating unique patterns and sharing them with their classmates.

The students participated in different academic stations that featured a Dr. Seuss theme. Teachers read aloud as the students learned about Dr. Seuss and how he became an author and illustrator.

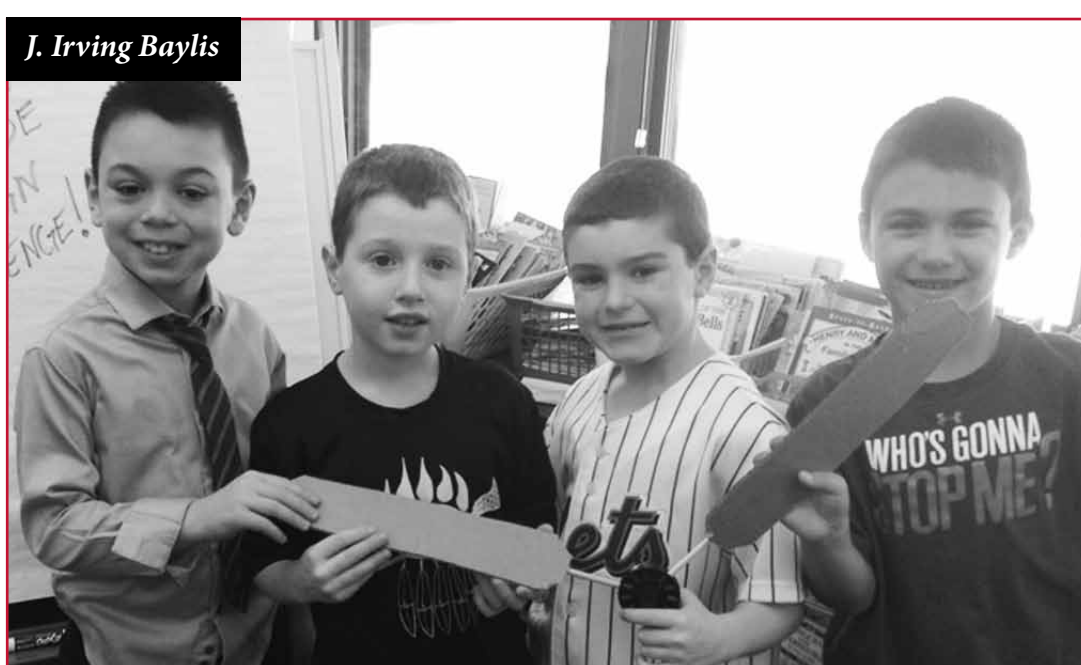
## Village

Students at Village Elementary were treated to a visit from high schoolers who are now Village alumni.

In a program aimed at creating intra-district mentorship, the elementary school welcomed back high school students who had attended Village previously.

The high schoolers filed into the lobby and received a visitor's badge that featured their elementary school picture. The teenagers reserved a few minutes to reconnect with their former teachers before heading to their assigned classrooms and reading to the students.

The elementary students listened intently and asked



questions after the reading was complete. Among their inquiries were those about high school life, schoolwork and what activities they could join when they reached high school.

## A.P. Willits

Third-graders at A.P. Willits delivered a spectacular performance of Disney's "The Little Mermaid" before an audience of fellow classmates and parents in the school gymnasium. The students put the show together under the guidance of Drama Club directors Sally Hawkins and Atara Stern.

"The Little Mermaid" follows Ariel as she makes a bad deal with the sea witch Ursula to become human in exchange for her voice. Ariel, Ursula and Sebastian came to life on a set that transformed the stage into an underwater world.

## Walt Whitman

In recognition of STEM Day across the district, Walt Whitman held its STEM Fair in the gymnasium. Dozens of students showcased stunning science projects, from a "Makeup Mirror" invention to a study of chemical reactions.

Parents, students, teachers and administrators wandered through the maze of colorful and

vibrant displays as students stood nearby explaining the nature of their projects.

STEM, which stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics, is a curricular initiative designed to increase the competitive edge in these fields in both education and the global workforce. STEM Day was recognized at all the elementary schools in Syosset in different ways.

## Berry Hill

During its regular brown-bag seminar, kindergartners and first-graders at Berry Hill gathered in the gymnasium during their recess time for a lesson on the heart. Led by volunteer parent and former registered nurse Kathleen Zandieh and Enrichment Specialist Mary Kolkhorst, the students heard a presentation about the components of the heart and how the heart functions.

Afterward, the students lined up to listen to their own heartbeats using a four-way stethoscope. They asked Ms. Zandieh about how blood flows in and out of the heart. The presentation was all part of Health Awareness Month, which teaches students about the importance of keeping their hearts healthy and happy.



# Opportunities in... the Research Program

In March, students in Syosset's research program participated in the Long Island Science and Engineering Fair. Junior Benjamin Senzer won first place in the Earth and Planetary Sciences category and will be representing Syosset High School at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh in May. Other highlights included Ritayan Chakraborty securing second place in Cellular and Molecular Biology, and Max Carol winning first place in the JV fair for his research in Environmental Sciences.

LISEF is just one of numerous competitions the research program enters throughout the course of the school year. The Intel Science Talent Search is a highly competitive national contest that seeks out the best and brightest research students in the country. Syosset saw the designation of three students as semifinalists in that competition: seniors Jiwei Zhong, Ridoy Majumdar and Divij Sharma. Only 300 students were designated as semifinalists out of more than 1,800 entrants from 460 high schools in 41 states, Puerto Rico and five American international high schools.

The research program is a large tent, filled with students who have a passion for science as well as other disciplines. Research begins at the freshman level, where students entering ninth-grade Honors Biology take a research course as a component. Research continues as a requirement until 10th grade, and then becomes an elective in junior and senior years. Research facilitator Veronica Ade said

the continued enrollment after 10th grade is substantial.

"In ninth grade, the idea is to get an overall view of what research is, what types of research exist and so forth," she said. "In grade 10, the students get exposed to the equipment and facilities of our research program here. Eleventh and 12th grade comprise students in the advanced research program who are getting ready for higher-level competitions such as Intel and LISEF."

There are 330 students in the program, a third of whom are upperclassmen, suggesting that the research program retains students well after it is no longer a required course to supplement science requirements.

"We try to let the kids decide what they wish to pursue in research," Ade said. "Sometimes, they come in liking physics. They think it's cool and they're really interested in it. From there, we try to pair them up with professors at universities who are pursuing that field. I tell my kids, if you're going to do all this research, you don't want to be bored. So don't go into a DNA lab if you're interested in computer science."

Ade begins to assess student interest at the ninth-grade level so she can begin that pairing process. Syosset has a longstanding relationship with many universities and local laboratories,



such as the Cold Spring Harbor Lab. In March, educators from the Cold Spring Harbor facility visited H.B. Thompson Middle School to conduct an experiment in DNA transference. Starting at a young age, Syosset students begin to get a grasp on the multiple fields in science that can be pursued, including social sciences such as psychology. The DNA labs also schedule visits and field trips with the elementary schools throughout the year.

For Ade, the research program reaches beyond those students with an eye toward a future career in the sciences and enables students with additional skills and interests.

"Success tends to breed interest, and the more they're exposed to the numerous competitions we enter, the more it increases other skills, such as their communication skills," she said.

# Opportunities in... the World Language Program

At a recent Board of Education meeting, David Balsamo, Syosset's administrative assistant in the high school World Language Program, presented a committee report highlighting the broad and successful accomplishments of the program.

The report indicated, among other things, that 76 percent of high school seniors were still enrolled in a foreign language program, despite having fulfilled the state's requirements for language.

"That's really what's impressive," Balsamo said. "It says a lot about the program. These kids are

so attracted to it, they take it way beyond what's required. We're really off the charts in terms of the percentage of students taking a foreign language class. A number of colleagues in other schools indicated around 40 percent for their schools."

Currently, Syosset employs the FLEX (Foreign Language Experience) model of foreign language studies. In this approach, students in grades K-5 are exposed to broad units in Russian, Chinese, Spanish, French and Italian. The FLEX approach doesn't drill down into any particular language, but rather gives students an overview of multiple languages, supported with social studies and multicultural units that provide a broad picture of the language and the lands where it is spoken.

At the middle school level, students are able to make an informed decision and choose between Spanish, French or Italian to study in grades six through eight. High school students are given the option to study an additional language while they continue their studies in Spanish, French or Italian. These language electives include American Sign Language, Russian, Chinese (for seniors only), Latin and Japanese.

Balsamo said the enrollment rates

show that students are engaged in a way that some districts, which concentrate on single-language proficiency, are not.

"I think [the students] are doing it because they're having fun," he said. "There's also a novelty factor, so kids don't burn out on one language."

Clubs and fairs have also played a role in maintaining student interest in foreign language from elementary school. There is a club for every language taught at the schools, and many of these clubs coordinate events throughout the year that make the experience fun and social. For example, each club gathers in November for a friendly soccer tournament, the World Languages Soccer World Cup.

At the middle schools, the multicultural clubs put together culturally informative programs, such as student exhibitions held in the gym. At these exhibitions, students create massive visual boards, paint their faces with the colors of their nation's flag and bring in a variety of global cuisine.

"There are three elements to keeping kids enrolled: they're having fun, they believe they can get a good grade, and they're learning something that has value," Balsamo said. "If they're doing those three things, it will be a success."





# ● Opportunities in... **Clubs** ●



Syosset boasts more than 100 clubs from the elementary level through middle school and high school. In many other districts, clubs are viewed as a “fun extra.” At Syosset, however, clubs are viewed as another layer of opportunity for students to develop skills in avenues of interest, to drill down with a deeper understanding of a subject they’re studying in the curriculum, or to find a social

niche in which they can feel welcome.

“In Syosset, our clubs are not extracurricular, but co-curricular,” said high school Principal Dr. Giovanni Durante. “Our clubs are designed to enhance the academic program as well as our character education program.”

Character education requires students to develop interpersonal skills and values

such as teamwork, compromise, kindness, philanthropy and problem-solving. The high school offers unique clubs such as the Adelettes and Choral Pride *a cappella* groups, as well as clubs that foster cross-cultural understanding such as the Diversity Group, the Muslim Awareness Group and the Martin Luther King Club. Like to read? How about joining the Book Club? Is cooking more your thing? Try the Cooking Club. Think you might enjoy some exercise to clear your head? Join the Cycling Club.

“The students in Syosset are afforded the opportunity to complete their high school careers as well-rounded citizens,” Dr. Durante said.

At the elementary school level, Village Principal Jeffrey Kasper said, the teachers sometimes draw from their personal hobbies and keep their finger on the pulse of what students would like to get involved in when deciding

to form a club. In addition to the academic clubs, such as the relatively new STEM Club, there are other clubs more social in nature — a benefit that can’t be overlooked when it comes to students at an age where they’re just beginning to develop relationships outside the family dynamic.

“It’s a function of giving these kids different opportunities to express things that aren’t covered in the curriculum, as well as the social aspect of it,” Mr. Kasper said. “Some kids who might have been socially on the outside looking in might now find a place where they can fit in. The clubs — the brown-bag assemblies that discuss one particular period, such as dinosaurs — revolve around a common interest. You open up a club and 12 kids join, and you now have 12 kids who have something in common. To me, that’s a real value.”

**“The students in Syosset are afforded the opportunity to complete their high school careers as well-rounded citizens.”**

## **HIGHLIGHT:** *The* *Scrapbook Club* AT VILLAGE

One unique feature for those attending Village Elementary is the school’s Scrapbook Club, which meets during recess on Wednesdays under the guidance of teacher Wendy Tepper, who brought her personal love for arts and crafts to the school when the opportunity opened up to start a club.

The Scrapbook Club, now in its tenth year at Village, is offered to second-graders and currently has about 24 students enrolled. Tepper breaks the students up into groups during the craft so they can interact with one another.

“During our scrapbook sessions, we share many photos as well as memorabilia from trips and family adventures,” Tepper said. “Scrapbooking naturally lends itself to sharing and showing who we are. It’s a great way to get to know students from the other classes in a more personal way.”

The club consists of both boys and girls and has proven to be a positive way for students to stay engaged during the winter doldrums while learning new ways to create an artistic



presentation.

Tepper said many such clubs have the same positive impact on student life and morale.

“Clubs are a fantastic way to foster new interests and encourage students to teach others their craft, hobby or talent,” she said. “They are also a great way to broaden students’ experiences as well as their relationships with students from other classes.”





# Opportunities in... **SPORTS**

It was a successful winter season for Syosset varsity sports on both team and individual levels. The boys winter track team secured a county championship with solid performances from William Anderson, Mohammed Dewji, Evan Garry, Alexander Hoelzli, Tyler Italiano and Eric Sheng. Meanwhile, the girls basketball team reached the playoffs this year, and the kickline team took first place in lyrical dance and in hip-hop at their respective competitions. The girls bowling team qualified for the county tournament, taking seventh place in the county.

Athletic Director Drew Cronin said Syosset's athletics program is committed to keeping a wide variety of options open for students to carve out their roles in athletics. Some students earn All-County and All-State recognitions. Some just play for the fun of it. Whatever their goal, Cronin said, the job of educators is to provide a chance for all students to get as involved as they wish.

"As they go through middle school, teachers and coaches really try to foster that growth model," Cronin said. "It usually starts with the local little league levels, and by seventh grade our kids are learning about leadership and taking advantage of as many opportunities as we can give."

Cronin attributes the ease with which students get involved in sports to the open enrollment and additional sections the school provides in sports. For example, at the middle school, there is a seventh-grade team and an eighth-grade team in a number of sports. This opens up 30 slots for students who might have otherwise gotten cut if there was only one seventh- and eighth-grade combined team.

"There are countless opportunities," he said. "At the high school, we're one of the few schools that has a JV-A and a JV-B team. Again, it gives a freshman an opportunity to play. Those are things a lot of schools don't have, and it's nice. The kids aren't sitting on the sidelines, not wanting to be there because they're not playing."

Syosset has varsity, junior varsity and middle school teams in more than 15 different sports, including swimming, diving, kickline, track, bowling, golf, badminton and tennis. At some of the elementary schools, dance and fitness clubs introduce students to athletics at an early age, while the high school also offers a variety of intramural sports as well as a cycling club, a ping pong club and a dance club.

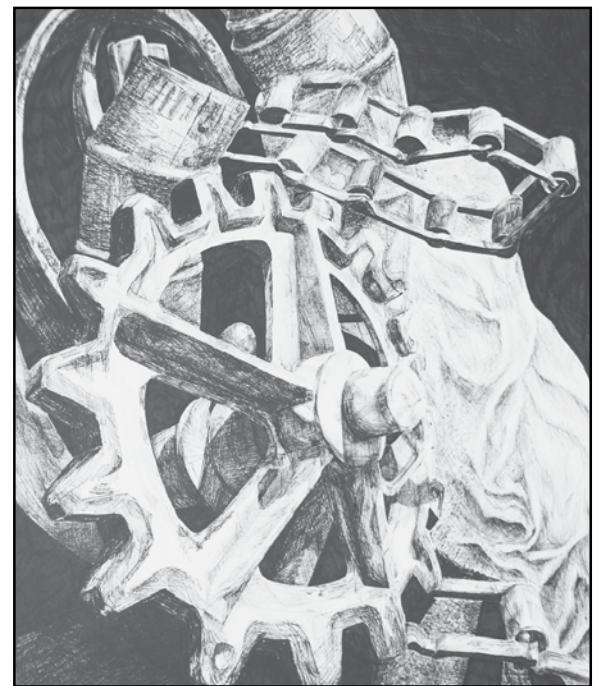
# Opportunities in... *The Arts*

Syosset's arts education program is as vibrant and colorful as a painter's palette. The program offers a full curriculum that begins at kindergarten and extends all the way to senior year. In music, all students enroll in some form of musical coursework until eighth grade, and, similar to research and foreign language, most continue their music education into high school.

Students at Syosset High School have the opportunity to join band, orchestra or chorus, and from there, continue to pursue co-curricular opportunities. From the female *a cappella* group, The Adelettes, and its male counterpart, Vocal Pride, to the high school musical and drama productions, to KEN literary magazine and the opportunity to have work displayed in the offices of central administration, there are countless avenues where students can express, refine and showcase their artistic talents.

At the middle schools, music instruction lends itself nicely to opportunities in a number of niche clubs, such as the jazz band, jazz choir and chamber orchestra. This spring, the middle school jazz ensembles got a chance to perform at the district's jazz festival held at the high school. For students with more literary aspirations, both middle schools print an art and literary magazine, which has the added value of teaching students the process of publishing and graphic design.

Clubs at the high school level that support arts education include the Anime Group, the chamber music group, the Create a Cartoon Group, the Dance Club, the Fashion Group, the jazz ensemble, the marching band, the Photography Club, the stage band, the vocal jazz ensemble, the Tri-M Music Honor Society and a club for dramatic scenery design and stage construction.



*Titled "Machinations," this artwork was created by Michelle Kim using pen and ink on board.*

Academically, Syosset offers every Advanced Placement art course offered by the College Board. And the academic benefit of art education doesn't stop at the doorway of the band room. Research reveals that music study enhances academic study in mathematics and language and helps students develop crucial social skills.

SPRING 2015

# SyossetPride

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