Syosset High School Library: Celebrating Success, Innovation, and Inclusivity

The library wins the American Association of School Librarians’s National School Library of the Year Award.

By: Nikhil Shah

The school library has a place for everyone. It’s a community center, study hall, hangout space, book room, and it is an essential part of our school’s culture and community. Just a few weeks ago, the library earned the prestigious National School Library of the Year Award from the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). This award, established in 1963, “honors school libraries exemplifying implementation of AASL’s National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries.” Since 1960, only six schools in New York State have been given this distinction.

In order to be considered for this honor, “we had to fill out a very comprehensive application,” said Ms. Trish Sergi. Information regarding circulation, lessons, collection, and innovation was submitted. The AASL assessed to what extent each applying school fulfilled their shared values, which are in summary, “to include, acquire, collaborate, explore, and engage,” said Dr. Sarah Wasser. Eventually, once the number of applicants had been narrowed down, a committee of about seven people met with representatives from Syosset. They interviewed librarians, Superintendent Dr. Thomas Rogers, Assistant Principal Mr. David Steinberg, and students. From this review process, the AASL concluded that our library exemplifies its values and exceeds the award criteria. The library’s dedication to improvement and community set it apart. Dr. Wasser said, “We have the ability to not stay stagnant. We can identify the community’s needs and change with it. We are constantly reevaluating what we are doing and how we can do it better.” For example, this year, the library began its expansion of the Holocaust Remembrance Day program to educate about other historical genocides. On April 18, Consolee Nishimwe, a survivor of the Rwandan Genocide, shared her unique first-hand experiences with the tenth grade.

The library also fosters school unity and supports its community members. Walking into the library connects you with new people. Ms. Kristina Holzweiss said, “librarians are the connectors- we see different students talking about the same thing and put them together. Or two teachers who may never have worked together, but they have something in common and they come to the library and see that.” Students visit the library to learn research and technology skills. The library serves as a study space for students during free periods and after school. In the TAC Center, administrators and faculty often collaborate. The library’s supportive environment makes it inviting to all members of our community. “We have a great collaborative relationship with everyone in the building, from administration to faculty to students,” said Ms. Sergi.

Receiving the National School Library of the Year Award offers many benefits for the library and for the community. First, it provides a monetary reward of $10,000, a valuable resource to use as the program evolves. It also includes an invitation to the AASL’s National Conference. Dr Wasser said, “I think it will allow us to share what we are doing on a national level. This will be really great for us, and also for our teachers and students to see that.” Ultimately, our librarians believe the true value lies in the introspection spurred by the application process. Ms. Holzweiss said, “The process has helped us take a step back and realize there are some really great things that we are doing here and there are other things that we can do.” Everything in the library had to be catalogued and itemized, which “was a real learning experience for us because we saw where we are lacking and where we are growing,” said Ms. Sergi.

Looking ahead, our librarians are committed to using what they have learned towards bettering the program. They expect shifts in the collection and possibly changes to the space. The staff is working towards establishing a writing center as well. “The library is a place of equity, where every student and faculty member in and find something said Dr. Wasser.
No Throwing Shade at this Unique Eclipse

Students and teachers anticipate the total solar eclipse during the afternoon of April 8.

By: Aanika Shah

On April 8, students and teachers grabbed their eclipse glasses to witness the total solar eclipse. The eclipse was a rare phenomenon, making it a highly anticipated event.

A total eclipse occurs when the respective orbits of the moon and the sun align, and since the size of the sun and moon correspond with their distances from the earth, this allows the moon to perfectly cover the earth. Syosset was not in the eclipse’s path of totality (full coverage of the sun by the moon), but had about 90% totality.

Many students were looking forward to the total eclipse because of its rarity. Junior Annie Qiu said, “Since this is only a twice in a generation event, I was really excited to see the eclipse and what it would look like.” The eclipse was only the second one to reach totality in the United States since 1918.

Students also enjoyed experiencing the event with their friends. Many students viewed the eclipse from the High School’s various courtyards and fields. Junior Sophie Wang said, “All my friends asked me to go see the eclipse with them, which I was excited about and I stayed after school and experienced it with them.”

Despite the overall excitement, reactions were mixed. Annie said, “It was cool to see how much of the sun was covered by the moon and I thought that it was an amazing experience.” On the other hand, Sophie said, “I thought it was kind of boring and it took so long, but I thought it was interesting and fun to see since everyone was so hyped to see it.”

The eclipse was a generally well-received event that led to students becoming more excited for the next one, which will take place on August 23, 2044. Annie said, “This [eclipse] was such an exciting event and I am really looking forward to the next one.”
Never is Now: Fighting Hate and Promoting Change

Syosset Students learn to fight hate and be a voice of positive change in their communities.

By: Nikhil Shah

On March 7 this year, eight Syosset High School students attended the Anti-Defamation League’s Never is Now Summit. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is one of the world’s leading anti-hate organizations. As per the ADL, its goal is “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” For its annual Never is Now Summit, the ADL invited individuals from around the world to the Javits Center in New York City to learn about and discuss antisemitism and hate.

At the 2024 conference, high school students convened to offer their perspectives and to learn from others who have a shared interest in fighting bias and hate. “I felt like I needed to know more about what I could do to educate my classmates, Jewish and non-Jewish, about antisemitism and learn strategies on how to handle antisemitic acts when they occur,” said Junior Gavin Edelman. They aimed to bring back their newfound insights to their community.

High schoolers listened to scholars, executives, influencers, celebrities, and politicians discuss antisemitism and hate. Keynote speakers, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Attorney General Merrick Garland, shared how they address systemic hate through their roles as civic leaders. Garland asserted that the priority of the Justice Department is to uphold equality and safety for all Americans under the law. His parents, Holocaust survivors, motivated him to take an active stance against hatred in society.

Influencers Eitan Bernath, Montana Tucker, and Miriam Ezagui, discussed how they work to dispel hate on social media platforms. They remarked on experiences of being in the public eye while advocating for change. They were victims of death threats and hate crimes. Ezagui, an Orthodox Jew, was intentionally sent non-Kosher food to demean her religious beliefs. Bernath was compelled to hire personal security. Hearing these harsh realities, listeners left empowered to use their voice to enact change. Junior Sloane Tannebaum said, “You wouldn’t expect them advocating so beautifully for something that I feel deeply about really moved me.” Students were able to interact and connect with the social media icons. These people are becoming more influential as media platforms grow, so their opinions and experiences felt valuable.

Later in the day, the high school attendees gathered for group workshops. Trained ADL facilitators led students in discussions to reflect on their day and learn how others were facing hate in their communities. They started in Centric Circles, an icebreaker activity. They then broke into small groups for in depth conversations. Gavin said, “I enjoyed how other teens my age and I were able to brainstorm what we could do to make a difference.” Students were shown that they have a prominent role in challenging hate and promoting justice in their community.

After breakout groups, Syosset students reflected on their experiences at Never is Now. Sloane said, “I’m someone who has always wanted to advocate against antisemitism and make sure that people know how to have their voices heard. From Never is Now, I learned that it is important to know that you are just as valid as everyone else.” Students felt as though they could apply lessons from the conference towards bettering their community. Many are part of groups in Syosset that are fighting hate and think their new experiences will be integral in promoting change. “I think I am going to take what I learned from the summit and incorporate it into many different organizations, clubs, and groups I am part of. I will definitely share what I have learned with the Jewish Student Union Club, the new school group Syosset U.N.I.T.E., and Breaking Borders,” said Gavin.

After a productive and educational trip to ADL’s Never is Now, Syosset students are excited to attend again next year. They look forward to sharing what they have learned with their families, teachers, and peers in Syosset.
SHS: Springboard of Tomorrow’s Scientists and Innovators

Vincent Huang is named a finalist in the nation’s oldest and most prestigious science and math competition.

By: Ridyansh Agrawal

Senior Vincent Huang was chosen to be one of the 40 Regeneron Finalists out of 2,162 United States and international high school students. The Regeneron Science Talent Search aims to recognize students’ research projects that can solve societal problems.

Vincent’s passion dates back to his childhood. He said, “I’ve always had a passion for science and technology. I think from when I was little, I was really enjoying kind of science TV shows, science documentaries.”

The Regeneron finalist segued his interest in science and technology towards his research. Vincent said, “As I got into high school, obviously we have such a great research program here, and I kind of realized for the first time that I can actually not just watch it and not just read about it, but participate in it at a hands-on level.”

The next step was to land a research mentorship with a professional institution. “I was offered an opportunity...I was so honored to have this opportunity at Stony Brook University, which kind of launched the next step of this project,” said Vincent.

The mentorship program helped Vincent choose his project. He said, “My mentor’s laboratory works heavily with crystallography and crystal diffraction. However, a consistent issue in that is the manual analysis of the patterns from crystal diffraction are just so difficult to interpret by hand. It’s really tedious and so I thought I would apply computing to that task.”

This research has potential for broad implications. “So it’s been used in the research of novel wide band gap semiconductors such as silicon carbide and gallium nitride, which are used in next generation 5G settlement networks and electric vehicle batteries, especially in defect characterization in those crystals,” said Vincent.

The Syosset senior’s journey has been a testament not only to Vincent’s own perseverance and ingenuity, but also our school’s strong research program and the teachers who continue to inspire the next generation of researchers.

Tips for Pursuing Research

“Pay attention and try really hard in every science class because I don’t think you can cheat the process.”

“I think having a foundational knowledge of science is super important at every stage.”

“Make sure that whatever field of research you’re doing, you actually enjoy the process because otherwise you will lose your mind. So, do something that not only are you passionate about the field, you’re passionate about the process.”

“Doing some activities that are otherwise unrelated to research can really help you with these competitions. So I’ve always done forensics debate, and I think that’s really helped my presentation skills, which are important for research.”

“Make sure you’re interdisciplinary and you do a lot in different fields.”
Taking Home the Win

The Syosset Forensics team earns recognition on both the state and national level.

By: Malk Al-Ebtah

The Syosset Forensics team participated in States on April 12 and 13, marking one of their final tournaments of the year. This event was the culmination of their year-long dedication and effort. Emily Huang, a junior who expressed the team’s collective sentiment, said, “Everyone had put in tremendous effort for this moment, and it paid off. We devoted weekends, adjusted plans for the club, and spent extra hours after school perfecting our speeches. Simply put, everyone’s commitment was remarkable.”

Reflecting on her own experience, Emily said, “Being able to advance to break rounds felt like a dream come true. It was a moment of great achievement and closure. I believe others who won felt similarly.”

Junior Katerina Paxinos emphasized the significance of acknowledging everyone’s hard work. She said, “It’s important to recognize the dedication of all participants. Winning numerous awards not only reflects our current efforts, but also the legacy and dedication from previous years. Forensics has positively impacted many lives and it is something I am proud to be a part of.”

Syosset Forensics was eventually named one of the top 5 speech and debate teams in the U.S. at the national championship in Chicago over Memorial Day weekend.

Writing to Empower

Sophomore Grace Liu publishes Research to Empower: A Vibrant Guidebook for Young Students.

By: Alice Huang

With prevalent misinformation, the rise of social media, and AI chatbots, we live in an era where learning research is more important than ever. Sophomore Grace Liu addresses this issue in her debut book, Research to Empower: A Vibrant Guidebook for Young Students, a fun, vibrant, and practical guide for students interested in research. The book shares Grace’s own experiences as a successful student researcher, and incorporates honest and effective tips to truly empower students.

“Given the popular misconception that research has to be boring, the whole structure of Research to Empower frames research so that it’s like playing a game. It supplements the K-12 curriculum, and serves to help students who come up with amazing research ideas, but don’t know where or how to start and don’t have the resources to,” said Grace.

Years ago as a middle school student initially interested in research, Grace had been shocked by the lack of research resources for younger students. Most of the existing how-to research books were written for adults and/or by university professors. She said, “When I was starting out my research journey, I wished that I had a guidebook like this that was fun and engaging, and encouraged me to keep the work up. Most research resources make research seem mysterious and extremely daunting for students.”

Once Grace discovered this gap in the market, she began to outline her project, a guidebook for students, written by a student. It took about two years to complete the book, written between weekends, breaks, and summer vacation, and finally, Research to Empower was officially published in January 2024.

“I once wanted to do something, but thought I was too small and too inexperienced. But I went ahead, and did it anyway. I hope more people can be inspired to start their passion project...the key thing is to stay focused on what’s truly meaningful for you and what you are passionate about,” said Grace.

Click the Play Button to access additional video coverage:
HOSA Brings it Home

Syosset’s HOSA performance at the State Leadership Conference earns 41 medals and 45 student qualifications for the International Leadership Conference.

By: Winston Zhou

Syosset High School’s HOSA team won 16 gold medals, 12 silver medals, and 13 bronze medals—leaving them with a total of 45 students having qualified for the International Leadership Conference (ILC) held in Houston this coming June.

Students meticulously prepared for over 15 events in medical and health-related subjects ever since the start of the school year. “We started really studying around December, took tons of notes, and put in a lot of hard work,” said Ethan Alex, HOSA Bowl First Place winner. Medical Math Second Place winner Mehmet Mercan said, “I’ve been preparing around since November, since the competition was really high. There were dozens of competitors from just our school, and over a hundred from the whole state. Only the top 3 were able to go to ILC, the international competition.”

In addition, the SLC experience as part of HOSA engaged various students in finding their interests and furthering their paths towards health professions. Community Awareness first place winner Michael Ren said, “Going to SLC was all in all an amazing experience that let me meet up with other New Yorkers with a passion towards health. It taught me that despite our different backgrounds, we all shared a common goal of bettering ourselves and our communities.”

“It taught me that despite our different backgrounds, we all shared a common goal of bettering ourselves and our communities.”

- Junior Michael Ren

Krishna Mohan (Pharmacology Second Place) and Daniel Ji (Sports Medicine First Place) celebrate their achievements at the SLC.
SYO Seniors of ‘24

In high school, everyone leads a busy life and sometimes we can lose sight of what our fellow classmates are doing. Passions, challenges, dreams — what exactly defines Syosset? Here are conversations with 6 seniors, 6 interviews, 6 different lives to share their individual stories.

By: Cody Cheng

Q: As a member of Student Gov. and all these clubs and sports, you’re a very vocal member of the school and our community. Why be part of so many things?
A: “My thought process is that aside from just the regular school day and all that, I have a lot of time to be spent to do things, right? And so, why not spend that time trying to improve the system that we have in place, to make it better for people.”

Q: If you could change one thing about the school, what would you change?
A: “When I look at other high schools, they build up, where we build out. It’s a lot more like a campus than it is like a building. I do like that we have a ton of courtyards, but I hate that we don’t give kids more access or more ability to be in those courtyards...having outdoor classes and things like that.”

Q: Where do you want to see yourself in the future?
A: “My plan is to work as a lawyer for a little bit before eventually pursuing politics. I think my goal is to insert myself into the political sphere. The thing is, I really hate the partisanship that we have...but I want to help people, and so I think doing that would involve me stepping up in government.”

Q: Any advice for freshmen?
A: “Try everything. Even if you think you might not like something, this is the period of your life where you have over a hundred different potential extracurricular clubs. Do stuff that’s gonna...put you out of your comfort zone, and you might just find some sort of interest. My public speaking skills, really I think have improved because of the things that I’ve involved myself in: Forensics, DECA, Model Congress.”

Q: If Kirby swallowed you, what superhero power would he get?
A: “I feel like [laughs] Kirby’s trope is that it’s one thing. I’ve made myself into a lot more than just one thing. Kirby would just, like, continue to exude confidence.”
Q: Many people might not know a lot about the SNHS. Can you briefly describe what it is you do?
A: “The Science National Honor Society is a selective group of juniors and seniors that excel in their science courses. We meet once a month in the mornings and that’s where we usually give updates, and we try and add some educational factors...we usually add videos or fun facts, just quick bits of information. We did the science behind baking cookies one time, just fun activities to keep people engaged in science.”
Q: Were there any challenges that you’ve had to face along the way?
A: “There’s always like, last-minute issues with rooming and stuff. For the cookie meeting we had after school, DECA actually had our room reserved, even though we had double-booked the room. So we had to find a different room last minute. It was a little crazy, but you know, it always works out. I have an amazing board and we all work together.”
Q: Any advice for freshmen?
A: “Okay, so this is something I wish people told me. Try and map out your entire high school career. Even though it’s overwhelming, that way you can plan out...and look at all the prerequisites for your classes.”
Q: What’s your favorite thing about Syosset?
A: “Honestly, I think the teachers.”
Q: Who’s the kindest teacher in the school?
A: “Thankfully, I’ve had a bunch of kind teachers but Ms. Steinberg holds a special place in my heart. Whenever I have an issue or anything, I always go to her, and she always accepts whatever I have to tell her with open arms.”
Q: You excel in many areas (science, math, tennis) and you’ve even made it to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Any particular favorite and why?
A: “I find myself liking biology the most because it allows greater exploration, and there’s so many possible opportunities for what you can study. You can incorporate math in it, you can incorporate history in it, you can incorporate many aspects of psychology — there’s so many disciplines within science, and biology in particular, that it makes it really exciting to study.”

Q: At Syosset, it’s common for students to take 5, 6, even 7 APs in a single year. How do you feel about this?
A: “When kids start to take, like, 8, 9, APs senior year, and 7 APs junior year — that’s when it starts to get overwhelming and it becomes a detriment to the kids’ mental health. So it’s important to set a limit and remember that not everything’s about academics; you have to also factor in your extracurricular commitments, so that’s something that I would keep in mind.”

Q: Who’s the funniest teacher in the high school?
A: “Definitely Mr. Cascone. He always brings the giggles to the class; this man somehow managed to fall into a window one day. So yeah, he’s definitely the funniest.”

Q: Any advice for freshmen?
A: “Make sure you have a good balance between your social and your academic lives, and make sure you’re prioritizing not only your APs...but also your extracurricular activities because it’s not all about academics nowadays.”

Q: What’s one saying that you’ve heard that you’ll never forget?
A: “This is another Retsim Enocsac saying— “Ladies and gentlemen, have a wonderful day, and do be careful out there, it’s a jungle!”

---

Q: You’re a talented musician, particularly at the trombone. Do you have a favorite song?
A: “In eighth grade...we played this song called “Fate of the Gods,” and I don’t even remember who wrote it, but it was just this amazing piece and definitely one of my favorite songs. It was a privilege to experience...and I think that’s really important because only a school district like Syosset has such amazing music resources.”

Q: What was it like to be able to conduct an entire symphony orchestra at the spring concert last year?
A: “It was definitely one of my top 5 experiences ever because it’s something that no one really gets to do, especially at my age. So it was one of the coolest things I’ve ever been able to do in my entire life.”

Q: How important was your involvement in the arts when choosing your major?
A: “I’m not going into music as my field, I’m going into psychology. But I also took that time to practice my instrument and listen to a lot of music, and still be part of a lot of music. I knew that going into college, choosing my college, was going to be based around where I could still experience music and being able to be in a lot of different music groups. I’m hopefully going to be part of the Clemson Pep band, as well as their jazz bands and wind ensembles.”

Q: Any advice for freshmen?
A: “Don’t overload yourself because I definitely did that and it got a little tough at times. Just have fun and make sure that whatever you’re doing, you really enjoy it.”

Q: What’s your idea of perfect happiness?
A: “I think perfect happiness would just be like, with the people that you love and the people that bring you happiness, and being able to do things with them.”
Fifty years ago in 1973, Syosset High School’s radio club WKWZ went on air for the first time. Over the past 50 years, WKWZ has grown in many ways, from renovating a new station between B-halls to increased involvement in Syosset High School events. In celebration of its growth, WKWZ hosted a special music countdown of the past 50 years as well as hosting special broadcasts with alumni.

For its 50 year anniversary, WKWZ celebrated by counting down the top songs from every year it has been on air, broadcasting hits from ’70s disco, to alternative rock of the ’90s, to the new hits today. When asked about her favorite music decade, WKWZ Production Manager Katerina Paxinos said, “I love it all,” and that she is “well versed in a lot of different decades and genres.” In addition to its special music countdown, WKWZ invited alumni to take part in some broadcasts. Mr. Pat Gessner, co-adviser of WKWZ since 2017, said that the club appreciates Syosset alumni and that they are “contributing to the station going forward.”

WKWZ has changed a lot during these past 50 years. When WKWZ first began airing, the station had been in the basement of Syosset High School. In 2021, the station moved out of the basement to a brand new studio in B-hall and also opened a podcasting studio. Describing his time supervising, Mr. Gessner said, “In terms of interest and involvement, the station is involved in a lot of different aspects that it didn’t used to be. I just hope that it keeps getting bigger and bigger.” WKWZ has taken part in broadcasting at major school events, from school games to homecoming, and the annual carnival. Over the past few years, WKWZ has ventured into new types of multimedia production, from working on article writing with the school newspaper, to interviewing and broadcasting, and even doing video interviews. Mr. Gessner said, “I hope that anybody who wants to take part in the station can and does.” When discussing the club’s growth these past fifty years, Katerina said, “I don’t see why we’re not to grow for another 50 years to come.”

WKWZ’s growth throughout the past 50 years is extremely impressive, but what is just as impressive is the strong community that the club has. The members in WKWZ have established a close knit group. Katerina describes that her favorite part of being in the club is the community that she is a part of. “The station as a whole is such a strong, and warm, welcoming community. It’s a safe haven for us to kind of express ourselves,” said Katerina.
Foodie Card: A DECA Team’s Experience Partnering with a Local Business

A team of juniors in the business organization, DECA, share their perspectives after competing and learning from a community member.

By: Larissa Mallen

Syosset’s DECA chapter came back from their state competition in Rochester with 69 qualifiers for the international level across diverse business-related events. Students spent months diligently researching, writing, designing, and practicing. Taking a closer look at one of the most impressive groups, juniors Helen Seo, Corey Schack, and Brandon Gerosa took home the title of state champions for their respective event, titled Business Services Operations Research. “We partnered with a local business and we came up with a plan to help improve their business model. This year we chose to work with a business called Foodie Card,” said Helen. One of the partners Corey said, “Foodie Card is a digital marketing agency located in Syosset, New York led by CEO Jared Katz and a team of 17 dedicated employees. Foodie Card’s mission is simple: Connect small businesses with consumers through marketing and incentives while also giving back to the community.”

Syosset competed against dozens of other teams from schools across New York who had the same objective of partnering with a business and improving upon it. Helen said, “States went amazing; my partners were all just so supportive of each other and I really loved how DECA can really help you foster these relationships. I really loved how we were able to connect with people from all over New York, especially because many of us are interested in pursuing a career in business.”

Mr. Jared Katz also came to speak with Syosset students through a presentation in what the Syosset business department called a “SYO Talk.” Helen said, “a SYO Talk is basically an event where we invite business leaders, teachers, professors, or just people who have worked in the business industry and can speak of their experience and give us advice, to aspiring business professionals, or anyone who wants to listen to what one of these people with so much experience and knowledge can tell us. It’s a great way for us to interact and network with leaders from all over our community and learn about how to navigate the business world post high school.” Additionally, hearing from one of their own really resonated with students. “He is a Syosset High School Alumnus, which is why it was even more exciting for him to come to talk to Syosset students because he was one of us,” said Helen.

Students who participated took away many important ideas from his speech. Helen said, “He had multiple startups that failed in the beginning, but looking at him right now, he’s the CEO of a company that’s growing really fast...just because you fail a couple of times... obviously, it can set you back, but you could still succeed.”
Helping Communities Through Creativity

Take a glimpse into the work of Syosset’s National Art Honor Society.

By Elaine Liu

Whether it’s decorating the halls with beautiful hand-painted murals, creating heartwarming greeting cards for hospitals, nursing homes, and children in Ukraine, or organizing art exhibits throughout the school, National Art Honor Society (NAHS) offers an enriching, unique experience for anyone who enjoys art and is passionate about making a positive impact in their community.

Founded on the beliefs that art has the ability to inspire, heal, and connect people, NAHS has provided its members experiences that display how they are not just artists, but ambassadors of change within their community. For example, amid recent conflicts in Ukraine, the club collaborated with the school’s Russian club to create holiday greeting cards for children in Ukraine. Through creating these special cards with peers, members of NAHS have also felt a sense of community and connection with other members. Sophomore Misha Munir said, “I love being a member of NAHS since it allows me to do art alongside many other artists. Since we are all collectively working together on these projects, including art installations and murals, I have been able to connect with people I never would have met if it weren’t for this club.”

Not only did members create cards, but they also created personal art pieces that further highlighted their creativity. By teaming up with various organizations, clubs, and businesses, members were able to amplify their impact and contribute to their community. For example, many participated in creating specialized pet portraits for a collaborative project with the Syosset High School Animal Rescue Club and FITPIT, Inc. The artwork that students created was displayed in an adoption center, so that adopters could see a piece of artwork made for their potential pet. Furthermore, members were able to display their artistic talents by creating elderly portraits that were to be gifted to residents of the White Oaks Rehabilitation & Nursing Center. Whether it be through watercolor or colored pencil, each work demonstrated these students’ commitment to uplifting their community. Sophomore Selena Chu said, “Whether it be working as a whole club in creating bookmarks, placemats, and cards for elderly and children in need, or individually in creating special projects, I felt like NAHS allowed me to help my community in so many ways I never thought I personally could.”

Throughout the year, students also were able to display their artwork in professional art galleries outside of school. For instance, the Annual Collaborative Heckscher Museum Project was a captivating event for many members, as this program would bring all NAHS Chapters together to collaborate, create and exhibit their artwork. With this program, students from different high schools met in the museum, learned about artwork on view, and created and exhibited their work during a museum event in the spring. Other exciting exhibits included the National Art Honor Society High School Exhibit and Syosset Library Art Exhibit, where students had the opportunity to showcase their skills. Chloe Wong, a current sophomore in NAHS, said, “As someone who is interested in art, I joined the club out of pure curiosity at first. I’ve grown to really enjoy being part of this club because not only is it fun, but through the various special projects we do throughout the year, we get to spread the joy of our art with others. It is such a great place to meet new people and hang out with your friends as well.”

The various projects and activities that members of NAHS participate in throughout the year highlight the transformative power of student creativity and compassion. Through their unwavering commitment to helping their community, NAHS members have succeeded in harnessing the power of creativity as a means of uplifting others. Chloe said, “I recommend this club to anyone who enjoys art and helping the community at the same time.”
PRO stands for Peers Reaching Out. In this club, members and life skills students are able to socialize and get to know each other. PRO club hosts breakfasts once a month where members bring bagels, muffins, and other breakfast items. At these breakfast meetings, students get a chance to make new friends and build strong relationships with people that they normally may not see throughout the day. Sophomore Zoe Voulgaris said, “I love the breakfasts with the life skill students, and I think it’s great that they can come out and get a chance to meet new people.”

In addition to these breakfasts, PRO club held many different fundraisers throughout the year. When asked about his favorite part about PRO club, life skill student Chris Hui said, “I think I like kickball the best.” Most recently, adviser Ms. Michelle Rosenoff brought the PRO club to Miko for a hibachi dinner. “My favorite part of PRO club was Miko. I had tons of fun with all of my friends,” said Scott Marmor, a life skill student in PRO.

In PRO club, students get a chance to unwind and socialize with others and have fun opportunities for fundraising events. “I just love that PRO club brings so many people together, and I love watching the life skill students grow,” said secretary Morgan Lowe.
As the orchestra began to play the first song, “All that Jazz”, the lights darkened until the main focus became the stunning spotlights of Chicago and its cast. From March 14 to March 17, 2024, Syosset High School put on their annual musical. This year it was Chicago, a musical taking place in the city of Chicago during the 1920s. It tells the story of female jazz stars who have been jailed for the accusations of their lover’s murder. Notably, the protagonist and star of the show, Roxie Hart played by Maria Dibello, narrates her story from being put into the Cook County Prison, to having to hire a lawyer, face a trial, and finally face her idol but soon rival, Velma Kelly, played by Sally Jamieson.

Prior to the show’s date, Syosset performers continuously announced and promoted their musical. They did so through the district’s official school website, a promo was aired on SYO Central, and signs were displayed inside the high school and throughout the Syosset community. Every night of the performance, the auditorium was packed with a huge and cheerful audience, which alleviated the stage’s mood. However, the crowd was not only filled with students and parents from Syosset, but also people across Long Island who awaited to see Syosset’s spectacular musical.

Performer Arvin Huang, who played the role of the Count Clerk and an ensemble member, described the show as fantastic and incredibly large, with a cast of 25 people and an orchestra and band. With coordinated dancers and fabulous singers in synchronization, the actors performed long, astonishing high-notes, alongside the ensemble and orchestra. Throughout the musical, the stage was shining with everyone in the cast dancing, lively with the orchestral music from the background, while information was posted with a screen projector on the left side of the stage to describe the location of the ongoing scene. “Chicago was definitely one of the best shows I’ve done, and although I’m not qualified to say this, one of the best shows Syosset High School has done. Overall, the entire group did a very good job at dancing and singing, the background singers and lead did awesome being able to maintain themselves and the notes,” said Arvin.

By the end of the musical, the performers were met with large applause, rounds of cheers, and ultimately amazing and highly positive reviews of the musical on all four nights. With the detailed performances and acting, in addition to the hardworking stage crew and stage design groups, the was brought together tremendous success.

Roaring Twenties Brought Back
Transporting Syosset back in time, the theater program performs its annual musical, Chicago.

By: Claire Li
Dune is Back: Bigger and Better

The sequel to the epic science fiction film Dune does not disappoint with its spectacle and storytelling.

By: Sarah Chen

The line of reality and fiction blur during Denis Villeneuve’s film sequel to the point where one could call it an immersive cinematic experience rather than just a film.

Dune: Part Two (2024) brings cinematography to a whole new level, using different techniques to make viewers feel a part of this whole new world. For example, one part of the movie is completely black and white, displaying the dark tone of the scene and reflecting the horrific feelings the viewers are experiencing simultaneously while watching. It’s eye-catching, yet fitting for the circumstances. Compared to the first movie, this continuation captures the physical landscape of planet Arrakis a lot more clearly, giving the viewers a deeper insight to the harsh conditions of the planet. And this is just the cinematography; the dialogue and chemistry of the actors are a completely other story.

Zendaya and Timothée Chalamet are a dynamic duo in this industry and are able to make their characters really come to life through their effortless chemistry. They don’t even have to speak, yet watchers are able to feel their connection through the screen. Austin Butler was also impressive. Through his ability to understand the complexity of his character and thoroughly become him, he is able to give one amazing performance. He is really able to portray how unhinged his character is and the lack of empathy for others. Butler even improvises a few aspects of his scenes, enhancing the quality of his performance and showing how dedicated he is to the role by personalizing it.

Despite all of the great qualities of the movie which made it a great experience, my only complaint is how rushed some things were. While it must be acknowledged that the movie is already very long and it’s hard to fit in every great idea, some scenes were disregarded too quickly, making the ending also seem rushed. It all happened in a flash, which can create confusion to viewers about what really went down as well as an inability to pinpoint the resolution of all these events.

Overall, the film’s aesthetic and plot are able to draw in the viewers to a whole other dimension and it really does bring the cinema experience to a new level. Kudos to Denis Villeneuve and everyone else who contributed to bringing this series to life. Let’s see what’s in store next for this world. It is definitely a recommended watch.
Syo Springs into a Trendy Season

Celebs
Singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo has become increasingly popular, especially with her Guts World-Tour. Olivia just dropped the deluxe version of her second album, Guts, and it is doing very well. Many Syosset students have been attending her concerts at Madison Square Garden and are always listening to her music.

Apps
Now that the warmer seasons are approaching, students are constantly checking the weather app! Temperatures are going up and so is the UV index. Make sure to stay safe and protected in these higher temperatures with sunscreen and stay hydrated with water.

Books
Written by E. Lockhart, We Were Liars is very popular amongst Syosset students. The book features Cadence who goes to her private island each summer with her cousins and close friends. Readers follow Cadence and her wealthy family through a page-turning story full of lies and surprises.

Games
Students are loving this fruit merging game. The goal is to combine smaller fruits, such as grapes or strawberries, into bigger ones, coconuts and pineapple, and eventually into a watermelon. This satisfying, mouth-watering game is very popular among Syosset students, eager for summer.

Food
This Swedish candy shop is trending all throughout New York. Only to be found in the city, Bon Bon gives customers a delicious variety of gummies of different flavors, shapes, and colors. Bon Bon just released their vegan, all-natural, and gluten-free take on Swedish fish to be bought online.

Movies
Starring Timothée Chalamet and Zendaya, Dune: Part Two has been bringing Syosset students to the theaters. This two-hour and forty-six-minute movie has gotten very good reviews by critics and students alike. Although it is leaving theaters, it will be streaming on HBO Max soon!

Music
A Syosset favorite, SZA, recently dropped her new single called Saturn. This new song is perfect for the warm weather and is always playing in student airpods around the halls of Syosset High School.

Drinks
Called a Shirley Temple, this carbonated cherry drink is perfect for spring weather. However, many people do not know how to make it at home. It’s easy: just take any lemon-lime soda and mix in two teaspoons of grenadine (cherry-flavored syrup) for the perfect refreshment.

Memes
At a sweet sixteen party, a group of boys has gone viral for dancing and singing along to Kanye West’s new song called Carnival. People have created entire personalities around these boys including nicknames and backstories.

Shows
On their 20th season, Meredith Grey is no longer even a character in this hospital show. A new batch of interns has entered Grey-Sloan memorial hospital, bringing more drama than ever. Make sure to tune in on the ABC channel on Thursdays at 9 p.m. for new episodes each week!

By: Emerson Schaefer
Designed By: Zoey Chiu & Victoria Lee
Spotlighted on Stage

Syosset Varsity Kickline competes on the NDA stage in Orlando.
By: Xihan Zhang

Syosset Varsity Kickline storms the stage with their Hip-Hop routine. After placing first in 2022 and second in 2023 for the NDA National Hip-Hop routines, SVK placed 2nd at Nationals for the 2024 season.
Photo provided by Jennifer Ross

At the 2024 NDA High School Nationals, the Syosset Varsity Kickline (SVK) saw success once again. Consisting of 20 girls and one boy, the team achieved an impressive record, placing top 5 for each dance in this year’s competition. With the addition of a new category this year, Large Varsity Gameday, the girls have continued to thrive for the top spots in the nation through their hard work, following a victorious first place win at the 2022 NDA Nationals.

Behind the scenes, cooperation and high skill levels were expected from each and every one of the team members to ensure success. “Going into nationals, our main goal was to make ourselves, our coaches, and choreographers proud of the work we have put in all season by performing the best we could onstage,” said Captain Avery Aaronson. Even as newcomers of the Large Varsity Gameday category, placing as runner-ups certainly showed off the dedication and effort every member put in. “The growth I have seen from my team from our first day of practice to the day they walked onto the nationals stage is exponential. This doesn’t only apply to their skill set as athletes and dancers, but also their maturity level, the indestructible friendships formed, and their unwavering dedication to their sport,” said Coach Jennifer Ross. Behind the hard work, there were all types of challenges that the team encountered. “While it did get tough at times, especially while trying to balance school work and other extracurricular activities, kickline was always able to be prioritized as my teammates and I wanted nothing more than to be national champions,” said Captain Taylor Steinberg. But through shared motivation and teamwork, SVK never failed to bring their best onto the stage.

“Not a lot of people see what goes on behind the scenes before we are able to perform on the Nationals stage. There were a lot of new skills that our choreographers incorporated into our dances this year, such as a side somi, difficult turn sequences, and complicated lifts. Everyone accepted the challenge eagerly and worked hard to ensure that all four routines would look perfect onstage,” said Avery.

Friendship, support and love has always been the foundation of the team’s success. The reward of the countless hours of practice is the love and support the teammates feel for one another. “The long hours practicing, pushing through tiredness, and excitement of watching all four of our performances are honestly unmatched and we are definitely all feeling the void of our season ending after finishing it the best way possible. This trip is where each member dances harder than they ever had before because they want to do the most they can for themselves, their teammates, and their coaches and the sense of unity that stems from it is unmatched,” said Coach Ross.

The senior captains, in their last year on this team, have reflected deeply on their memories and lessons learned through all these years. “One of the most important skills I have learned from being on SVK is the ability to still enjoy myself and create long-lasting memories while working hard towards a goal. I can confidently say that SVK has changed my life for the better and given me a second family,” said Avery. “Throughout my experience on this team, I have learned to be a leader, a role model, a best friend to each of my teammates and coaches while also being determined and dedicated as I spent an immense amount of time learning how to perfect new skills, work on my technique, and helping my teammates,” said Taylor. The impact this team has had on these girls show nothing more than the purest form of love. As coach, Ms. Ross was able to see their bond and all the hard work firsthand. She said, “I am constantly in awe of the talent, fearlessness, and perseverance of this team and I look forward to it every single day. They have pushed me to grow in so many ways not only as a coach and leader, but as someone simply learning from others who all have the same love for dance.”

From arriving at practice to taking the national stage at Orlando, SVK has demonstrated the truest form of sportsmanship that forever remains the most precious gift a team could have. “Sometimes I don’t even have the words to describe how proud I am of them because it doesn’t seem to suffice. They are everything a coach hopes their team will be and more,” said Coach Ross.
Spring Season Recap

By: Rachel Liu

Baseball

The quick rise of Syosset’s Varsity Baseball has been evident through the buildup of a young new team with potential to be one of Nassau County’s top teams in the near future. This spring season alone, the team has shown success on and off the field, as they continue to grow and advance deeper into their season. Seniors Vincent Favata and Steven Klein will continue to pursue baseball in college at Mount St. Mary’s College and Saint Michael’s College, respectively. The team began their Conference AAA playoffs journey in the quarterfinal as the number 5 seed, against number 4 ranked Port Washington. They finished as a Nassau County quarterfinalist.

Track & Field

As one of the most popular sports at Syosset High School, Track and Field provided opportunities year-round for students and off-season athletes to find a new passion or keep their footwork skills sharp.

On the boys side of Track and Field, they continued to improve their individual standings by leaps and bounds. "Towards this season, we have patched mistakes made in the last season, and as this season has progressed, we have shown out in our races and shown exponential growth physically and mentally through training at practice and at meets," said junior Matthew Robotham, who received All-State honors in the long jump at the New York State Championships. He also broke the Syosset school record multiple times just this season. "Although people say it is an individual sport, we train in groups together depending on the event, which promotes a competitive spirit but also a desire to grow together," said Matthew.

As for the girls, their dominance on the track has been unwavering. Following their win at Indoor County Championships this past winter, the girls have been fighting to stay on top, something that they are very good at. "This team is a young one. We have a very large majority as underclassmen, while you may see how this is a struggle, every girl has found a way to step up and be a better athlete despite their new beginnings," said senior Tracy Freeman. At the end of April, members of the team competed at the Penn Relays, on UPenn’s historic Franklin Field, where crowds of up to 100,000 people came to watch a historic meet. The girls’ 4x100 relay ran a 52.38, which is the fastest time ever recorded at this meet. The 4x400 relay ran a time of 4:05.60, which currently stands at #1 in Nassau County class AAA. "From the outside it may seem like an individual sport, but no one girl can win a meet on their own. In competition, girls are held accountable to perform to the best of their abilities by their teammates, which usually produces better results. If they didn’t have a supportive team, it would be much easier to give up during a difficult race when the pain creeps in. Overall, we are very happy with where we are right now," said Coach Michael Spiteri. The girls headed into championship invitational meets looking to defend their title as one of the county’s best teams thanks to the hard work and dedication of both the athletes and coaches. The girls finished second in Nassau County and the boys finished third.

Lacrosse

As one of Syosset High School's most popular sports, the Boys Varsity Lacrosse team came off of a 2023 County Championship title as Nassau County’s Class A Champions. This season, they found themselves back in playoff position after beating St. John the Baptist 12-3. Four of Syosset’s lacrosse team members were recognized on Newsday’s Top 100 Players on Long Island: Senior Captain David Disque who will play lacrosse for Johns Hopkins in the fall, Junior Captain Will Cawley, a Lehigh commit, junior Evan Ostrager, and sophomore Brody Waxer.

On the girls’ side, the varsity team closed out their regular season celebrating their seniors who led them into the playoff season. Some honorable mentions are senior Katelyn Lee, who will be attending Columbia University in the fall as well as playing lacrosse. Senior Leah Kauf er will play lacrosse for Binghamton University and senior Ava Ceglia will play for Lynn University. Both teams finished as Nassau County semifinalists.
By: Rachel Liu

Tennis

Boys tennis continued their tradition of excellence this season, bringing their regular season record to 10 wins and 2 losses. Coming off of the 2023 season as State Champions, the boys had their work cut out for them. Junior Captain Veyd Tivedi said, "Our team has a lot of depth this year in our lineup, giving us an edge, especially in doubles." Led by Coach Shai Fisher, there was a level of confidence that the boys brought into this season and carried throughout. “Our aggressiveness at the net has shot up from last season and now everyone is starting to get more comfortable with playing outside and in the unconventional style that we apply in practice,” said Veyd. The teamwork and camaraderie within the tennis community has proved to be a motivator in itself, with teams supporting each other while still saying competitive. They repeated as back-to-back New York State Champions.

Softball

The Varsity Softball team won the majority of their games during the season, looking to continue their fantastic run heading into the playoffs. Their captains Alexa Plevrites and Nicolette Ferarro have proved themselves able to lead a well rounded and talented team to one of the best seasons in Syosset history. Nicolette, a junior, committed to play softball at SUNY New Paltz following graduation. The girls finished as a Nassau County semifinalist.

Flag Football

As a relatively new sport to Syosset High School, Girls Flag Football dominated the competition throughout their entire season. Going undefeated in their regular season, the girls have been nothing short of spectacular. Among the accomplishments this season, they were drawn in a lottery to have the opportunity to play at the New York Jets Training Facility, where they were awarded $1,000 from the New York Jets. Junior Ivy Matthews said, "Every player on the team is willing to put the team before other obligations and make an effort to come to every practice, game, team bonding. We all want to win together and we do so by playing selflessly." While it was only their second season playing, "everyone had to learn all of the plays in a short amount of time, but each player focused on what they were asked to do and learned how to do so efficiently," said Ivy. Despite being only in their second season, the team finished as runner ups in Nassau County.
Boys Varsity Golf
Navigating Fairways to Victory

The golf team looks to make another strong showing this season.

By: Cody Cheng

With the start of spring sports this March, many athletes were eager to lace up their shoes, grab their equipment, and hit the fields, including the golf team.

The Boys Varsity Golf team is a growing community in Syosset, drawing a loyal audience of PGA fans and DeChambeau diehards. Despite not having a true field at Syosset High School to play on, that didn’t stop the team from being well-prepared for the season. Coach Dean Strohmayer said, “We’re able to play at two private country clubs, Pine Hollow Country Club and Cold Spring Country Club. We’re not able to use them until the first week in April, so we go to Bethpage. We play nine holes there, and we also go to Eisenhower Park to play.”

Golf often doesn’t get the same recognition that other sports receive due to its nature and unusual format. Golf tournaments often take longer and retain a solo aspect that other sports don’t have, and it’s unique in that the lowest score wins. “It’s what makes golf hard to win,” said Coach Strohmayer.

Overall, hopes were high for the season. Last season, the team finished fourth in Nassau County, and coming off a great season and being part of one of the most competitive leagues in the county, the team was confident that they have what it takes. Coach Strohmayer said, “We’re looking forward to a good season, and competing for, hopefully, the county championship. Once you get in it, you get hot for two days, anybody can win it.”
EDITORIAL

Cinderellas, Sweets, and Slams
By: Peter Napoli

March Madness is the gold standard of the perfect sport. Throughout the month of upsets, buzzer beaters, and clutch opportunities, it stands apart from other basketball tournaments for several compelling reasons. One defining factor is the players’ sheer ambition. Unlike NBA stars, many March Madness players are mostly under 23 years old, unpaid, and unlikely to pursue professional careers in the NBA, fueling their drive to compete fiercely in this tournament as it could make the end of their basketball careers. This sharp contrast sets the stage for an unparalleled display of passion and determination.

The tournament’s structure, characterized by one-and-done games with sixty-eight teams participating, exemplifies an environment where every moment counts. In 1985, this opened the door to engage the viewer even more by letting fans make brackets to try and put their NCAA knowledge to the test. There are millions of March Madness fans who participate by making a bracket, and ruthlessly watching the gut-wrenching endings of games just because they picked them on a piece of paper. Unlike the NBA playoffs, where there are only 16 teams (not including the play-in tournaments) and series play out over multiple games, March Madness leaves no room for error, elevating the stakes and intensity with each sudden death matchup.

Moreover, March Madness is renowned for its potential for monumental upsets. Examples like Yale’s victory over Auburn in 2024 and Oakland’s triumph against Kentucky highlight the unpredictability and excitement that define the tournament. Kentucky was picked to win it all by 6.5% out of 22 million brackets and lost in the first round. These underdog stories captivate fans and showcase the essence of March Madness.

Yet, there is one characteristic that all fans can agree on. The NCAA and NBA playoffs both share in common — the unwavering loyalty and spirit of fans. Just as every NBA team contains many devoted followers, each college in March Madness also has its own passionate fan base, whether it be a large school with a significant sports history, or a college with little athletic history. In essence, March Madness embodies the art of sports — the passion, dynamic environment, and relentless pursuit for the fresh taste of victory. It’s a celebration of the underdog, a showcase of raw talent, and a reminder that in basketball, anything is possible. And that’s why March Madness is truly special, whether it’s when watching at a popping restaurant, with your friends at the game, or even on the couch with your dad.

Don’t Get Your License...Just Yet
By: Cody Cheng

Most people turn 16 during their sophomore year. By the New York State law, this makes them eligible to receive their learner’s permits, and as such, they take Driver’s Ed in their junior year and finally receive their license in their senior year, signaling an important milestone in their lives. But to me, this doesn’t make much sense.

First is the issue of taking Driver’s Ed. The class requires you to get to school at 6:30 a.m., which means you’re missing close to an hour of sleep. With all our APs, SUPA homework, and loads upon loads of homework, students are already far below the 8-10 hours of sleep recommended by the CDC, and this only makes the issue worse.

Second, the skill itself won’t be that useful. Usually, in college, you don’t have much of an opportunity to drive, but this of course depends on where you go. Nevertheless, the hours upon hours spent on learning to drive essentially is so you can drive for one year, your senior year, then you won’t be able to drive for four straight years. At that point, why even bother?

Finally, and most importantly, teens just aren’t good drivers. According to a government agency, teens suffer a higher rate of fatal car crashes due to their immaturity and lack of skills, when compared across all drivers. Between merging, parking, knowing road signs, and more, teens just don’t have what it takes to be a good driver, and it shows—just look at the senior parking lot.

So what should you do? In my opinion, it’s simply not worth it to get your license in high school, which is why I would wait until after college—or better, towards the end of college—to pursue your license, as crazy as it may seem. You’ll be a better driver, more mature, and in a better position to pursue your license, and you won’t be a liability to other drivers.