Hard Work Pays Off for Valedictorian and Salutatorian

Each graduating class has the opportunity to recognize two of their peers who have the highest overall GPA in the graduating class. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian have the highest and second highest academic average respectively.

This year’s Valedictorian, SeungDo Reiner, and Salutatorian Leonard Rutigliano III (everyone calls him Lenny) have striven to reach the bounds of excellence. They have continuously pressed themselves to do better and exceed even their own expectations.

As students in Hendrick Hudson High School, both SeungDo and Lenny were active throughout the schools array of student activities and athletics. As a 4th year member of the track team, SeungDo plays an important role in the team’s 400m Hurdles. In fact, he recently won the Class B Sectionals title for this event.

Though not usually a risk taker, Lenny decided to try out for “Grease” this past spring. Lenny landed the role of Danny Zuko in the stage production. “It was a great opportunity for me to expand my comfort zone and try something new,” he said.

Despite some difficulties with reading and writing early in his academic career, Lenny overcame it and has since excelled in English. When he was in 8th grade, Lenny became a published author with his fantasy fiction book, “Creature of Darkness: The Past Reborn”.

Lenny will enter Trinity College this fall where he will pursue a degree in education. Lenny is also planning to study both Spanish and Mandarin.

Each student’s success is the culmination of years of work by any number of teachers, administrators, hall monitors, custodians and support staff. When asked though if one teacher stood out in his mind and contributed the most to his success and having the greatest influence, SeungDo responded, “Coach Bailey”.

For Lenny, it was Mrs. Barthelmes who seemed to have the greatest influence on him. He spoke about her “amazing energy” and how “supportive and helpful she was” as he wrote his book.

As graduation gets ever closer, both gentleman spoke about their nerves and mixed emotions about leaving Hen Hud after four years. From missing friends and teachers to the excitement of living away from home and making new ones, both Seungdo and Lenny are ready for the challenges that lay ahead, but for now they are content enjoying their last few days in the place they have called home for what seems like forever. In a few short days, they will leave Hendrick Hudson for the last time as students and embark on the next leg of their educational journey.

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Eleven Hen Hud Juniors Qualify for National Merit Scholarship

The Hendrick Hudson School District is proud to announce that eleven of our High School Juniors have qualified as National Merit Scholars. They are; Ashley Augustine, Daniel R. Briggi, Jonathan P. Cohen, Alana Harris, Miranda E. Kephart, Tara G. Kutzbach, Sophie E. Ruff, Michael P. Spinelli, Zach A. Struver, Anna C. Walsh and Jeffrey P. White. With over 1.5 million students competing for the scholarships and recognition, only 50,000 students will be selected as qualified for the National Merit Scholarship. In September, 16,000 of the qualifying students will advance to the Semi-finalist round. Semifinalists are designated on a state representational basis. They are the highest scoring entrants in each state. Finally, in February, some 15,000 semifinalists will be notified that they are finalists for the National Merit Scholarship. “This is an extremely prestigious honor,” said High School Principal, James Mackin. “These students have worked exceptionally hard and have contributed greatly to our school and community. They exemplify what it means to be a Sailor.” he concluded. “It is a testament to our faculty and academic program that eleven of our students have achieved this honor,” said Dr. McCann. He continued, “we are fortunate to be able to recognize these students for the hard work and dedication. As a community, we ought to be proud of their accomplishment because we have been able to provide them with the opportunities to excel and strive for excellence”.

According to their website, the National Merit Scholarship Program “has recognized 3 million students and provided over 335,000 scholarships worth more than $1.3 billion. The honors awarded by NMSC to exceptionally able students are viewed as definitive marks of excellence. Recipients of Merit Scholarship® awards, Achievement Scholarship® awards, and corporate-sponsored Special Scholarships have increased the nation’s respect for intellectual accomplishments and have contributed significantly to its talent pool of future leaders.” www.nationalmerit.org

Get the Latest Hen Hud News Updates!

Would you like to receive district updates via e-mail? If so, join our mailing list by visiting www.henhudschools.org/subscribe

By subscribing, you will receive news about district events, student achievements, and periodic district wide updates.

It’s a great way to stay informed and learn about some of the great things happening in our schools.

Join Today!
Involvement is Key
A Message from Marion Walsh
President, Board of Education

The English writer and philosopher Roger Scruton once said “We should not value education as a means to prosperity, but prosperity as a means to education. Only then will our priorities be right. For education, unlike prosperity is an end in itself...” Never was this more true then on May 18th this year, not just here in Hendrick Hudson or even in the Hudson Valley. It was an important day for education in New York State. Even with economic times so dire, communities across New York State overwhelmingly chose to support their public schools and pass their budgets. With an impressive 92% of budgets passing, the children across New York State are the real winners.

We are fortunate here in Hendrick Hudson to have such a supportive and involved community. With high voter turnout, the community supported our budget and our bus proposition. On behalf of the Board of Education, thank you for your support and confidence. Your vote and support equated to optimism and support for our children’s future.

I also would like to congratulate and welcome Mr. Carson Jacobs to the Board of Education and congratulate Bill Oricchio for winning a second term on our Board. They, along with myself, will begin our three-year terms on July 1st. On behalf of us all, thank you for your support but, most importantly, your trust.

I would also like to thank Keith Bobolia for his willingness to step forward and run for a seat on the Board of Education. Mr. Bobolia stepped forward, not only with concerns, but also ideas on how to improve our schools. In the coming months, the Board will develop goals for the new school year, and we will take the concerns of the entire community into consideration as we develop priorities for the coming year. We will continue to set high goals for our administration to improve student learning and build stronger schools with more innovative programs.

Your presence and support make our schools stronger. Your thoughts and concerns help us to create the type of school district you want—one dedicated to academic excellence and student achievement that reflects the needs and values of our community.

Sincerely,
Marion Walsh

Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary Updates Playground
With Colorful Game Stencils and New Recess Equipment

The Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School unveiled an updated playground for its students and the community. Improvements included colorful new pavement games, such as a sunflower shaped hopscotch, alligator hopscotch and brightly painted four-square games, as well as new play yard equipment. The game stencils and equipment were purchased thanks to grants obtained through the Buchanan-Verplanck PTA and the District’s Food Services Department.

“As parents and educators, the PTA wanted to ensure that recess time was educational and a healthy place to let off some energy and enjoy fresh air with friends. There is a great deal of learning that happens outside of the classroom, and the additions to our playground are already helping to foster sharing and new friendships. The stencils and the equipment have provided an excellent platform for the BV students to learn new games, practice good behavior, and enhance both physical and social skills while having lots of fun,” said Shari Munitz, PTA Grant Committee Chairperson.

Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School physical education teacher, Derek Kisslinger, fourth grade teacher, Alex Levine, resource room teacher, Jim Dobbs and fifth grade teacher, Michael Variano, spearheaded the playground renovation and equipment purchase project. Teacher aides Audrey Tandy, Dawn Gauthier, Roberta Nohai, Maria Rose, Patricia Kehoe and Kathleen Bertoline, along with PTA member, Andrea O’Malley helped paint the actual stencils on the pavement.

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“Thanks has to go to the PTA and Food Services for their generosity and commitment and to the members of the PTA and elementary school staff who volunteered their time to paint the game stencils with these great vibrant colors,” said Mr. Kisslinger. “We have noticed that our students are more physically active now during recess than they were before these improvements were made.”

The game stencils were purchased from local playground stencil company, Creative Pavement Stencils (CPStencils), who also donated the use of a large four-square stencil to help attract the older elementary students to the new playground. CPStencils is a nationally known company whose affordable and easy-to-apply game stencils were designed to improve physical fitness, enhance education and stimulate children’s imaginations.

“It’s great to see the children enjoying the new equipment and playground games,” said Clare Carey, Director of Food Services. “Creating an environment where being physically active is fun for the kids works well with our efforts to provide excellent nutrition for the students that tastes great too. Physical activity and good nutrition go hand and hand in the fight against childhood obesity.”

In addition to the new playground games, the grant money was also used to purchase each classroom its own recess pack containing balls, hula hoops and jump ropes. This new ownership provides the students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they are accountable for and respectful of the equipment, two objectives of the building’s overall PBIS initiative.

“It’s amazing to see how diligent the students have been with the regards to taking care of and keeping track of the equipment,” stated Levine. “Each class is really working together as a team.”
May 18th was a great day for the Hendrick Hudson Community! Our district experienced near record voter turn-out for what could have been one of the most important budget votes in recent memory. Never before was so much at stake in a single vote: class sizes, academic programs, sports, the arts, extra-curricular activities; they all were at stake, and fortunately our community saw fit to approve our proposed budget and allow us to continue to provide the children of our community with a quality educational experience. I say this with great pride; we could NOT have done this without you.

As a community, we came together to show our support for our schools and, most importantly, our students. The budget passed continues to preserve class sizes while enriching student programs. Despite the faltering economy, we are able to continue to support our students and programs at the levels they deserve.

Our community’s Yes vote on our budget helps to confirm that we are, in fact, on the right track and providing our students with exceptional educational opportunities. The vote was 1102 yes votes and 791 no votes. We are also pleased that our Bus Proposition and the Hendrick Hudson Free Library budget passed as well.

We are grateful for such positive voter turn out and their support for our schools and programs. The vote affirms our communities desire to support education and continue moving in the positive, forward direction we have.

For those who voted against the budget, please know that we hear your concerns too. We understand the difficulties that so many of our neighbors are facing and will continue to look for ways to reduce costs and expenses to keep our budget fiscally responsible.

In this day and age, it really does take the entire community to educate our children. It is important that our children see that our community places a high value on education and supports those values through active participation in our schools.

We look forward to working with our newly re-elected and elected Board of Education Members, Marion Walsh, Bill Oricchio and Carson Jacobs, respectively. Each of these individuals brings their own unique experiences to our Board and our school district. They each will play a pivotal role over the next several months in setting district priorities and goals.

The community has spoken and we are grateful for what you have said. You have said education is the key to the success of not only our students but our community and our future. Today’s students are tomorrow’s leaders, and we are confident that your support at the polls will translate into a better, brighter future for our community.

On behalf of the Members of the Board of Education, the faculty, staff and administration, we thank you for what you have done to make Hendrick Hudson the “Bold and Innovative home for learning...” that it is.

Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel McCann

The Hendrick Hudson School District Board of Education honored local hero and community member Duane Jackson for his actions that helped avert a national tragedy in Times Square on Saturday May 1, 2010.

Mr. Jackson, a resident of Montrose, was working in Times Square on the night of May 1, 2010 when he and a fellow street vendor noticed a suspicious vehicle parked in Times Square. Upon further investigation, Jackson and his colleague observed smoke emanating from the abandoned vehicle and heard loud pops. Realizing the potential danger, they immediately contacted law enforcement personnel who then evacuated the busy tourist spot.

As everyone knows now, the car was in fact filled with gasoline, fireworks, and fertilizer. The keen observation and quick action by Mr. Jackson and his colleague helped to save countless lives in and around Times Square.

“Mr. Jackson is a true hero,” said Superintendent Dr. Daniel McCann. “In a time when so many people turn there heads, Mr. Jackson saw something suspicious, trusted his instinct and notified the appropriate law enforcement personnel. As a result this potential tragedy turned into a great moment for not only New York City but for our community as well,” he concluded.

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Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel McCann
On May 24, 25, and 26th, twenty-four teachers, parents, Board of Education members, community members, and administrators came together to create the next phase of our district Strategic Plan. Working with a consultant, we reviewed perceived challenges and opportunities in the Hendrick Hudson Schools, and drafted 6 Strategies for the 2011 – 2016 plan.

Once the Board of Education approves the strategies, the next stage of the work will require many more members of the community. We will be forming 6 action planning teams to work on the new strategies, and because strong teams have at least ten members, we will be asking for significant participation.

At this point, we are planning our work for next year, all of which will still come from the original Strategic Plan. Some of the highlights include creating a Photography class for the high school, expanding our Broadcasting Center to include the High School as well as the existing Center in the Middle School, and equipping each one of our buildings with wireless laptops.

We will also continue our curriculum mapping project. During the 2010-2011 school year, the following curricula will be presented to the Board of Education for adoption: High School English and Social Studies, Middle School English, Social Studies, and Mathematics, and Elementary School Mathematics. At each level in our district, the framework we use for curriculum writing is the Backwards Design Model, in which teachers determine what children need to learn and be able to do, how to assess their learning, and finally, create the learning activities that will lead to this learning.

Please watch for further information regarding the forming of Strategic Planning Action Teams. We welcome new members, and encourage any interested community members to join in this important work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alice Gottlieb

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Tenure Night in Hendrick Hudson
A proud night for the Hen Hud Educational Community

At the May 26, 2010 meeting of the Hendrick Hudson Board of Education, the members of the Board on the advice of Superintendent Dr. Daniel McCann granted tenure to fourteen teachers and three administrators.

Tenure night marks the conclusion of a long journey for many of these teachers. The awarding of tenure is a testament to the tremendous amount of time and effort each teacher and administrator have put forth to bring education and inspiration to our students.

Each teacher and administrator who received tenure has uniquely contributed to the success of our students and our schools. Their achievement is the culmination of hard work, dedication and most importantly a thorough and thoughtful evaluation process. Each grantee has met with their building principal and district administrators. They each have earned their tenure and we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with them as they grow to be master teachers.

CONGRATULATIONS
HENDRICK HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT
Athletic Department, Coaches and Athletes
For receiving the
New York State Champions In Sportsmanship Award

The Strategic Plan, Take Two
Mapping a Road for the future

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Sincerely,

Dr. Alice Gottlieb
On Thursday, May 27th, the Hendrick Hudson Golf Team held their traditional end of the season outing/BBQ at Hollow Brook Golf Club. This year, the team invited the high school staff to join them for nine holes of golf followed by burgers and fries inside the clubhouse. After dinner, Coach Derek Kisslinger handed out varsity letters and awards. Chris Larmore was awarded the “Lowest Differential” Award and Aaron Kline received the “Most Improved Golfer” Award. Both players were named All-League with Larmore also earning All-Conference recognition. The team finished with a 13-3 record and were crowned League Champions for the third year in a row. Special thanks to Frank Graniero and Phil Eyre of Hollow Brook Golf Club for their support and assistance in organizing the event.

Four senior Hendrick Hudson High School students, members of the Kings Ferry Community Troop 1261, were awarded Girl Scouting’s highest honor by completing their Girl Scout Gold Award. Each scout completed an individual project by accumulating over thirty leadership hours, completing badge work, and at least sixty-five hours on their selected project. Each Gold Award project has to be approved by the Girl Scout Council prior to its start and each scout has a final review interview in front of a panel of judges. These young women have not only completed the highest award in scouting, but have been scouts since kindergarten! The girls completed their Bronze Award in fifth grade, Silver Award in ninth grade and now the Gold Award. Troop 1261 is led by Bonnie Smith and Laura Astarita.

Kaitlyn Ramirez, a sophomore at Hendrick Hudson High School, was selected as a winner of the 2010 Drug Awareness Stop DWI essay contest sponsored by Westchester County to further the organization’s efforts in a national drug awareness campaign. Kaitlyn received a $150.00 United States Savings Bond for her essay based on the theme, “I Have Better Things To Do Than Drugs!” The ceremony on Friday, June 04, 2010, was held at the Westchester County Executive Offices in White Plains. There were over 500 entries for the poster contest and essay contest. There were winners in a variety of categories from elementary, middle and high school students.

Blue Mountain Middle School 6th Grader, Travis Ramirez, recently starred as “Little Guido” in the Westchester Broadway Theatre’s main stage production of “Nine”.

Though he shares the role with another boy, he was fortunate enough to perform for both Press night and a special performance for the well known writer Maury Yeston. Blue Mountian Music teacher, Mrs. Carol Arrucci, arranged the audition for him and the director chose him and one other to share the role for a three month run, 8 shows a week.

“The cast and crew at WBT are really nice–I am so happy,” boasts Travis. It is his first time in a major role, but his musical director Sue Anderson from Croton-on-Hudson says, “he’s like a pro!” Luckily, his rehearsals began during the February break and the show began soon after, in mid-February.

Congratulations, Travis!
F.G.L Students Go Green for Earth Day

The Fifth Grade Students at Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School really know what it means to go “Green.” For them, living in a sustainable environment means minimizing the amount of waste that we create.

The students in Rita Many’s Science class spent a good deal of time learning about reducing, reusing and recycling waste as part of the Education for Sustainability curriculum introduced into the Hendrick Hudson School District this year. In cooperative groups, the students collected, measured and calculated the amount of waste created in various populations in one year. They presented their information to the entire school and posted recycle signs in each classroom.

In celebration of Earth Day, Art Teacher, Doreen Halsall worked with the students to create special flower pots using only recycled materials. The 84 fifth graders then collaborated their efforts, and organized their own Flower Pot & Bake Sale to help promote the importance of sustainability. The proceeds from their sale helped to save a tree in the Rainforest, and enabled them to purchase reusable products that will decrease the amount of waste going into incinerators and landfills.

The students even learned how to reduce waste production by creating their own composts in school. They used scientific probes to measure the temperature of their composts as they observed and recorded the changes that took place over time. The use of these high-tech science tools were made possible by the generous donation of community members.

As a result of all of these events, the students have begun to develop a sense of what it means to sustain Earth’s natural space by reducing the amount of waste that we put into it.

Welcome to Hen Hud Territory

To celebrate the 400th anniversary of Hendrick Hudson’s historic sail up the river, the Advanced Placement Studio Art students and members of the Hendrick Hudson Art Club, under the mentorship of Ms. Jessica Lang, mounted a colorful mural at the entrance to the Guidance Wing.

Guidance Wing. Hendrick Hudson, an English seaman was sailing for the Dutch East India Company looking for the “Northwest” passage to Southeast Asia. He “found” the river, now named for him in September 1609. After sailing as far north as the Albany area, he turned around and in October of that year, dropped anchor off the banks of what is now Verplanck, part of the Hendrick Hudson School District. As a continuing celebration of the District’s historic namesake, the district schools are celebrating throughout the year. Recently, teachers were treated to a Historical Walking Tour of Verplanck, led by history teacher Colleen Blair and library aide, Sharon Morrison. The tour was just one of the workshops offered to teachers during a Superintendent’s Conference day. Local history is part of the New York State fourth grade curriculum. The mural, designed and created by AP students: Karolis Krulis, Zelda Mendelowitz, Danielle Wright, David Kang, Meghan Kenny, Sheilagh Deady and Dana Denenberg and Art Club members: Megan Burke and Cassandra Rogers, was framed by the technology department led by Mr. Stewart Zaiman.
The Mission of Hendrick Hudson School District, recognized as a bold and innovative home for learning, is to ensure each student is a committed and passionate learner who achieves his or her maximum potential and contributes to society. This is accomplished by a system characterized by:

• A culture of highest expectations for all
• An exemplary staff
• Diverse instructional strategies that meet the individual interest and abilities of all students
• Optimal technology embedded in teaching and learning
• A fully engaged, supportive community dedicated to common goals