



It's Elementary

VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN

SUMMER 2019

Victory Challenge Brings Out the Best in Us All

A public school education carries with it a certain obligation. Those of us fortunate enough to go to school in America are obliged to use what we learn and the skills that we gain to give back and help others. As fans of *Spider-Man* understand: with great power comes great responsibility.

Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen teachers inspire and encourage students to use their education to help give back and care for others with diverse needs. Recently, Valley Stream gave students throughout the District the opportunity to participate in the Empire Game's Victory Challenge, part of the Nassau County Empire State Games for the Physically Challenged. For eight years in a row, Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen students and staff members have attended the athletic event to participate in competitive sports and recreational activities that are best suited to the unique abilities of those with physical challenges. It's one of the true highlights of the year in Valley Stream.

We held our own recognition ceremony a few days after the games to present our participating athletes, buddies, and staff members with medals and certificates to award their involvement in the Victory Challenge. Students' connections with this event show the support they feel toward their peers and the success they achieve while working together. We're reminded of a great quote from Maya Angelou: "When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed."

Every year, over 1,000 children from all walks of life gather at Mitchel Athletic Complex in Uniondale where physically challenged youth are given the exciting and extraordinary chance to contribute in The Nassau County Empire State Games for the Physically Challenged. The sports and activities included in the event promote inclusiveness for youth athletes—ages 5-21 years old—affected by physical



Nassau County Empire State Games for the Physically Challenged



challenges, that could include being an amputee, being blind or visually impaired, having cerebral palsy, being deaf or hearing impaired, and/or having a spinal cord injury. There are children that travel from all over New York State for this weekend of fun, friends, and the feeling of reaching the finish line. Participating athletes are then awarded for their accomplishments with gold, silver, and bronze medals—just like in the Olympics—as well as ribbons for their accomplishments in track and field, archery, swimming, table tennis, and wheelchair basketball.

This annual event has been made possible by various corporate sponsors and public/private partnerships that are very generous toward participating youth. Dedication from parents, families, teachers, coaches, and volunteers is crucial in making the games so successful and allowing them to return year after year.

Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen A

In late June, at all four Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen schools, students and families celebrated excitement and anticipation of starting a new journey and the sadness of saying goodbye to

JAMES A. DEVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



HOWELL ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Moving-Up Celebrations in Pictures

at Moving-Up ceremonies. It was an emotional day for all involved; the event featured both the people and memories. Take a look at photos from each school's Moving-Up ceremonies.

WHEELER AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



WILLOW ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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WHEELER AUDITORIUM SUPPORTS LEARNING

Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen recently hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for their newly renovated Wheeler Avenue Elementary School auditorium, which marks the completion of a major project from the District's 2015 Bond Referendum. This auditorium features new lighting systems, refurbished flooring, modernized chairs, updated audio/visual systems and fresh curtains—all while maintaining the beloved aesthetics of the overall school building.

Large improvement projects such as these are proposed to support student learning and expand their environments in which to grow and develop. When students enter a more comfortable, updated space, they are more ready to learn. Refurbishing environments, such as this auditorium, will have a positive impact on developments within the District in the future. A positive school environment is a vital step in encouraging motivation to engage in the learning process.



Attending the event were Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen's Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Constance Evelyn, administrators, Parent Teacher Association members and students. The District is eager to have all members of the school community experience more concerts, assemblies, and future events in this updated and beautiful auditorium.

CONGRATULATIONS AND FAREWELL TO THE 2019 RETIREES

Recently, the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen administration and Board of Education met to celebrate members of the staff who retired at the conclusion of the 2018-2019 school year. It was a bittersweet night for all those in attendance, and we can't thank the retirees enough for their dedication and service to our schools and students.



Pictured (L-R): Darren Gruen, Principal, James A. Dever School; Frank Chiachiere, Ph.D., BOE Trustee; Jayne Carey (**retiree**); Vinny Pandit, BOE Trustee; Fran Rosato (**retiree**); William Stris, BOE Trustee; Enrico Perciballi (**retiree**); Milagros Vicente, BOE Vice President; Sean Douglas, BOE President; Constance Evelyn, Ed.D., Superintendent; Ruthie Fields (**retiree**); Mary Ellen Vella (**retiree**); Toni Pomerantz, BOE Trustee; Mindy Berlin (**retiree**); Patricia Farrell, BOE Trustee; Thomas DiGiorgio (**retiree**); Gaston Weisz (**retiree**); Frank Huplosky, Principal, Howell Road School; Gayle Steele, Principal, Wheeler Avenue School; and Rosalie Ambrosio, Principal, Willow Road School

VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN 2019-2020 BOARD OF EDUCATION

Frank Chiachiere, Ph.D., *President* • Milagros Vicente, *Vice President*
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