



# CLIFFSIDE PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

March  
2018

## WINTER NEWSLETTER

### MESSAGE FROM:

**Michael J. Romagnino, Superintendent of Schools**

I am happy to deliver the 2018 Winter Newsletter for the Cliffside Park School District. We have included some interesting activities and events that have or will take place in each of our schools.

The central office administrators been working on the 2018-2019 school budget which will include renovations to our facilities as well as new staffing and programs across the district. The budget will be presented to the public at the end of March and a budget newsletter will follow.

### SUPPORT OUR UPCOMING BUDGET!!

Your vote, on April 17<sup>th</sup>, will make a tremendous difference in the operation of our school programs on a daily basis. For example, as a result of your approval of the 2017-18 budget, we were able to maintain all of our existing programs while adding additional staff, new math textbooks, reading materials and new science texts. We maintained our technology services which included purchasing additional Chrome Books for our new one-to-one program for grades 7-12.

We were also able to continue our 5-year maintenance plan by improving and upgrading our schools, such as, the addition of classroom space and furniture, remodeling of bathrooms and flooring, a new roof at School 5 and other projects throughout the district that are needed to provide for a safe, working environment for our staff and students. The help of the Borough's Mayor and Council allowed us to continue the employment of armed security guards for each of our schools. This is essential as the security of your children is our utmost priority.

### School 3 – From the Desk of Mrs. Calabrese, Principal

It is with the utmost pride and joy that I wanted to reach out to you to make you officially aware of some wonderful news. The New Jersey Department of Education recently released their annual School Performance Report which gauges school performance for every single educational institution in the state.

These reports are released to the public at the beginning of the calendar year for the previous school year. Our very own School #3 received one of the top ratings in the state and was ranked as the 27<sup>th</sup> best overall school in the state of New Jersey and 8<sup>th</sup> among pure elementary schools out of more than 2,000 schools statewide!

Every year students from all walks of life have the opportunity to participate in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. It is one of the nation's oldest and most iconic competitions. This year School #3 took part in their first annual Scripps National Spelling Bee. Students from grades 3-6 participated and each class entered two finalists into the schoolwide spelling bee. Finalists are named in the picture below:



Jayden Urias, Heidy Yinelly Galvez, Amana Muhana, Chloe Nunez, Sienna Armani, Natalie Alban, Thomas Vivas, Elbert Cifuentes, Xander Tumux, Julian Alban, Caroline Calo, Erick Atz, Joao DaPaz, Xhesika Marshyti, Ipek Cingil, Keira Brennan.



On March 15th, Xhesika Marshyti, a 6th grade student at School #3 will participate in the Bergen County Spelling Bee at Bergen Community College.

Ms. LoRocco has been a special education teacher for over 5 years at Cliffside Park Elementary School #3. Whenever someone has questions about a student's education plans or needs ideas on effective classroom accommodations that will help a student succeed, Ms. LoRocco is the "go to" person. She takes her own personal time to rewrite classwork, homework, and tests to meet the needs and legal accommodations of the special education students so that each student can be challenged and successful. Ms. LoRocco is a true expert at collecting and presenting data in a positive, professional tone that calms and encourages parents to support the intervention and classification process. When Ms. LoRocco sits with a parent, she has a very personable, understanding, and comfortable manner. She expertly presents her collection of data demonstrating the challenges a child has, but also emphasizes the positive attributes the child possesses. These efforts help bring parents to the table to help their child.

Ms. LoRocco efforts outside of the classroom make everyone take notice. She helps create activities that all students can enjoy and participate in including the 6th grade Halloween Carnival and Santa's Workshop. She also strives to show all students that if they make good decisions and work hard, they can have a successful future. She is also the volunteer basketball coach for the school's Co-Ed Team. For her efforts and dedication inside and outside the classroom, we honor Ms. LoRocco as a Teacher Who Rocks.

**School 4 – From the Desk of Mrs. Roussos, Principal**

School #4 has continued to be actively involved in our learning experiences over the last few months! Kindergarten through third grade students met with author Kathleen DiMario who talked about her journey to becoming an author. She read her book "What Kind of Dog Am I?" which the students thoroughly enjoyed. School #4 also celebrated Read Across America Week by decorating the school to look like Seussville along with each class having a very special guest reader. We continue to embrace literature and build a lifelong love of reading here at School #4!

6<sup>th</sup> Grade students and teachers had an amazing time becoming astronauts at the Buehler Science Center. The simulation of the space launch allowed for a learning experience that will never be forgotten.

As winter weather moved in on the outside, there has also been a "flurry" of activity inside School #5! Our Pre-K classes welcomed the change in season with lessons on winter and hibernation – some of our classes even made caves that they could hibernate in, if only for a short time! We've also had great programs going on during the past couple of months. Girl Scouts was in full swing as well as our "Girls Who Code Program". Our sixth-grade girls participated in this 10-week program which resulted in the design of a school website. They also learned about women who made major contributions in the field of technology. The girls had so much fun that we are looking to continue the program! For the first time, School #5 has entered the "Scripps National Spelling Bee"! Students in grades four through six spent weeks studying and practicing under the guidance of Ms. LaRose and Ms. Morales. We had our first spelling bee on February 5<sup>th</sup> and Emily Cruz emerged as the champion! Good luck to Emily as she represents School #5 in the North Jersey Spelling Bee on March 15<sup>th</sup>! Our younger grades, who were in the audience cheering on their schoolmates, were so inspired that they asked to have their own spelling bee! Many busy bees are studying for the next spelling competition on March 16<sup>th</sup>! School 5 also had two big literacy events to celebrate our love for reading. On February 1<sup>st</sup> we celebrated World Read Aloud Day and read along with students all over the world! Our Pre-K even skyped with students in another school who read to them. March began with Read Across America Day when so many wonderful guests came to read to us and talk about their professions and how reading is such a big part of their lives! We had so much fun this winter - we can't wait to see what spring brings!

NJ Makers Day, a statewide celebration that promotes and introduces maker culture and the teaching of values associated with STEM-based learning was hosted by Ms. Mollinedo our School #5 Librarian on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Students in grades 5 & 6 using a \$500 grant from NJ Stem Pathways Network worked in groups to create activities that allowed students in grades 1 to 4 to visit various stations ranging from constellation making, coding, arts & crafts, LEGO and K'Nex building, robotics, planting flower & vegetable seeds, bath fizzies, rainbow in a jar-creations and a student designed maze tunnel.





## School 5 Celebrates Makers Day



## School 6/MS – From the Desk of Mr. Bargna, Principal

Our First-Grade parents will be reading to our students every Friday during March to celebrate “Read Across America”.

Congratulations to Mrs. D’Anna’s 5th grade class who learned the importance of gift giving during their school wide St. Jude Research Hospital charity events. Her students expressed an interest to help others who are suffering with childhood cancer. She directed her class to work in pairs to research this cause and as a result developed a PowerPoint presentation that was shown to other elementary classes.

They raised approximately \$1000!!!!

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> the PTA hosted its annual Middle School Handbag Bingo night at the CP Senior Center.

All proceeds will benefit middle school student activities. Handbags and wallets were raffled.

On March 9<sup>th</sup> the PTA hosted The Brain Show for grades 1-6 in the school 6 auditorium. Students competed against each other in grade level quizzes where prizes were awarded. That night The Brain Show hosted Family night where parent and children competed against one other. Prizes were awarded.



## **Looking ahead!**

Our 6<sup>th</sup> graders will compete with other 6<sup>th</sup> graders from Schools 3, 4 and 5 in a round robin basketball tournament this coming May.

Our MS Student Council will host a 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade basketball tournament, 3:30pm April 11<sup>th</sup>. Students will select teams & play against one another.

Debate Club - Week of June 11<sup>th</sup>, Year End Debate in the MS Auditorium, two teams of students will debate a common topic which will be recorded and streamed into classrooms.

Middle School Spring Play - May 15 & 16 7pm “Show & Spell” - Students take on overzealous parents, crazy coaches and nostalgic relatives as they prepare for the annual spelling bee.

On Tuesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, School 6 will host the district’s first English Language Learner/Title 1 Family Literacy Night! We hope to share strategies families can use at home, including useful websites and free or inexpensive English literacy-based games. The goal of the evening is to help families extend the learning that the children are doing in school. We hope this fun, information filled night is the first of many!

Every month, our Cliffside Park Middle School English language learner’s parents receive a translated intermediate edition of the newsletter entitled “Reading Connections”. The newsletter includes strategies for parents such how to choose a good book to read at home and what are ways to encourage speaking and listening skills within the family. Families have provided very positive feedback with regards to this middle school English Language Learner outreach.

**From the Desk of Mrs. Jenna Russo, Dir of Special Services**

On Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, parents of students with special needs were invited to an information session on Anxiety Awareness, which was hosted at Palisades Park Jr/Sr High School and presented by a local psychiatrist and intern. Several parents attended and learned about signs and supports for children with symptoms of anxiety.

On Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, a sixth Preschool Disabilities class opened within the District based on growing enrollment. Beginning at the age of 3, children who are eligible for Special Education are provided an appropriate program. Each school year, the Child Study Team receives an increased number of referrals for preschool age children in particular. Cliffside Park Public Schools welcomes our new students, who are playing together and developing friendships. They are adapting to classroom routines, developing language, and learning functional skills as well as numbers, colors, shapes, and letters.

On Feb 8<sup>th</sup>, we hosted parents from 10 local districts to learn how to start up a Special Ed Parent Advisory Group, giving parents an opportunity to provide the district with feedback on its Special Ed programs. Several parents attended and some have shown interest in learning more, with collaboration from a parent facilitator from another local school district.

The Cliffside Park Recreation Department is developing a program geared towards supporting children with special needs through Camp CARE, beginning this summer. Cliffside Park Special Education Teacher Giana Scerbo and Director of Special Services Jenna Russo have served as advisors towards developing and planning this program, including working together with the Recreation Department to survey parents in order to guide activities, such as arts and crafts, water play, sports, dance, and yoga. Registration opened in early March, with spots for 30 children in grades K-5 to attend Camp CARE from July 9-Aug 1 on Mondays – Wednesday from 12-3pm. Please contact the Rec Department with any questions: 201-313-2072.

Mar 6<sup>th</sup> - A parent information session at Fort Lee High School was offered to Cliffside Park parents on the topic of Transitioning for Adolescents with Special Needs.

If parents, community members, or staff are interested in receiving notifications about upcoming parent information sessions or community resources regarding special needs or mental health, please feel free to join Jenna Russo's Remind app group. To receive messages via text, text @poswd to 81010, or to receive messages via email, send an email to [poswd@mail.remind.com](mailto:poswd@mail.remind.com)

**High School – From the Desk of Mr. Pinto, Principal**

**CPHS ROBOTICS**

**SEASON IN REVIEW, J. Guerra, Advisor**

In the exciting world of robotics, Cliffside Park's very own Team 251 (the Mecha-lodons) ended a great season. The team hosted almost 30 other teams on Nov. 5, and then hit the road competing against dozens of teams from northern New Jersey at tournaments held in Wayne Hills, Englewood, and Oradell. Each year these outstanding young men and women are challenged to design, build, and program a winning robot and strategy equipped to play a game. This year's game consisted of an archaeology-themed set of challenges including stacking "glyph blocks" in a grid and retrieving a "relic," all the while navigating a course with three other robots trying to do likewise. The team routinely reached semifinals in every competition typically placing in third.

**GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR**

- Expand current schedule of competitions.
- Facilitate non-team members' projects, including rovers and other engineering activities.

- Strengthen ties to younger grades through middle school outreach and continued growth of Summer Enrichment classes.
- Alumni outreach for former team members to return and share their experiences in the real world as well as practical tips from past competitions.
- Develop a recreational drone program for the high school and summer enrichment. This program would continue from the traditional conclusion of competitive robotics (February) and into spring.
- Through collaboration with our school community, explore new avenues of implementing technology in ever-changing learning environments (i.e. 3D printing, makerspaces, etc.)

### CPHS ART HISTORY

Recently, the CPHS students taking Art History with Ms. Maks were presented with the opportunity to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Cloisters. Students were excited to visit the Cloisters, the branch of the Metropolitan Museum dedicated to the art, architecture, and gardens of medieval Europe. Students were impressed by the colorful stain-glass windows.

The highlight of the tour was the room with a priceless set of Unicorn tapestry. Students were mesmerized and taken by the Unicorn story and its representation in weaved textile. Upon completion of the tour, students completed a small Art History assignment where they reflected on their experiences in the museum.

Since students are in the middle of Renaissance Art studies, we visited the Michelangelo: Divine Draftsman and Designer exhibit in the main Building of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The exhibition presented a number of works by Michelangelo including 133 of his drawings, 3 of his marble sculptures, his earliest painting, his wood architectural model for a chapel vault, as well as a substantial body of complementary works by other artists for comparison and context. This is a once-in-a-lifetime exhibition and was enjoyed by all!

### THE SENIOR EXPERIENCE

Three years ago, three young ladies approached the administration and asked if they could intern in Englewood Hospital. As juniors, they had been volunteering at the hospital on weekends and noticed that students from other schools were receiving credits in lieu of volunteer hours. Those three ladies, with a handful of other students, made up the first group of students in the “Senior Experience.”

Since September of 2016, the program has grown to include sixty-five seniors placed in work settings under the care and guidance of a mentor. A few of the opportunities offered to students are placements in law firms, hospitals and medical offices, educational settings, art and sound studios and engineering firms. We hope to grow the program and place fifty percent of the senior class for the 18-19 school year.

Juniors interested in the program are encouraged to notify their guidance counselors and begin exploring opportunities. Students are encouraged to seek out potential placements and often times are required to interview and undergo a training. Feedback from many students is positive and has led to paid jobs or increased interest in the profession; however, some students become frustrated with their selection. To those students, we remind them that this is for career exploration and at least they now know this profession is not what they expected.

### Individual Achievements

Kleidon Ndreu competed in the state finals of the Academic Decathlon and took a gold medal in the speech competition.

Marjorie Murillo, our Drama Club President, won a medal for her superior performance in the Musical Theatre Solo category for her performance of “Your Daddy's Son” from *Ragtime*.

Elusive Grajales won a 3rd place medal and trophy for Best Supporting Actor for his performance of Joe Rubiac in *The End of Civilization As We Know It*.

Valgeir Rundlett accepted into the Navy Nuclear Propulsion program. Wow!! Congratulations!



## CPHS DECA

In order to prepare students for the business world, CPHS joined the international organization DECA in the 2016-2017 school year. DECA is a co-curricular program that prepares students to become emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management. In a matter of one school year, the co-curricular grew from 8 members to 40 active members. Students have the opportunity to attend conferences designed to prepare them for college and careers, earn recognition and prove their knowledge in DECA's Competitive Events Programs, and go on field trips.

This year's CPHS DECA students visited the Federal Reserve Bank in NYC and are planning to go on a trip to Madison Square Garden to an all access tour of the venue and attend a Q & A session with their marketing team. Students also competed in New Jersey's north regional competition at Ramapo College. In fact, two students qualified to compete at the state level. For the rest of the DECA students, they are getting themselves prepared for next year. They all look forward to the opportunity and can't wait to see where it will take them!

## CPHS UNITED NATIONS TEAM

The Cliffside Park High School Model United Nations Team attended their second Model United Nations Conference this March in NYC. It is the largest Model United Nations in the world which draws a diverse group of informed high school students from around the globe to address current issues. This year CPHS joined 1,800 student delegates in the Opening Ceremonies at the United Nations and four days of committee sessions.

