

Briarcliff Manor

Union Free School District



BHS Students Celebrate Graduation 2019

The 135 members of Briarcliff High School's class of 2019 gathered with their teachers, school administration, and classmates to celebrate with their families for the last time as high schoolers during the school's 96th commencement ceremony held on June 21 at Pace University in Pleasantville.

"The highlights of the year are far too numerous to list in one speech," said Briarcliff High School Principal Deborah French. "There were stunning theatrical and student performances on stage, sensational athletic seasons, spectacular science research projects, superior literary publications, and superb extracurricular accomplishments, giving our community much for which to be joyful and proud."

Valedictorian Andrew Kanovsky and Co-Salutatorians Letitia Chan and Isabella Wang entertained their classmates and the crowd with speeches that were sentimental, motivating, and comical.

The guest speaker, chosen by the graduating class, was Briarcliff High School teacher Paul Bordonaro, who spoke to the crowd about inspiration and success. "I want you to know in your hearts that no one wants to see you succeed more than your parents, friends, and teachers," he said. "I will leave you with the same words I do at the end of class every Friday: Please be smart. Please be safe. Please make good decisions."

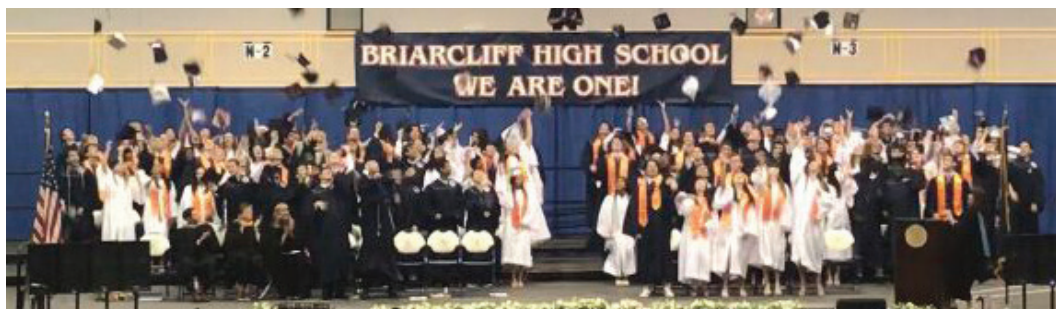
Superintendent James Kaishian offered a heartfelt farewell to Assistant Principal Dan Murphy and complimented the class on its accomplishments. He closed by saying, "good luck and Godspeed and wherever you find yourself may you always be at home." He then delighted the graduates with one last request: a class selfie taken by Valedictorian Andrew Kanovsky to be featured on his Twitter feed.

The ceremony was enhanced by musical interludes from the high school's Chorus, Symphonic Orchestra, and Concert Band that ranged from classical selections to Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Waters." Finally, it ended with the traditional tossing of the graduation caps. ■

Shelley Graham and Stephanie Grace are Briarcliff Schools' 2019 Teachers of the Year

"This year marks the first time that an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) team has been awarded the designation, placing a spotlight on the hard work and dedication necessary to be part of an ICT classroom," said Superintendent James Kaishian. "Please join me in offering our congratulations to the commitment, collaboration, and teaching excellence of these two teachers."

"Most impressive to me is the great pleasure they take in helping children find joy in their accomplishments and in practicing resilience, persistence, and problem solving when they struggle," said Todd Principal Colleen O'Neill-Mangan. "Their students are eager to learn and intellectually engaged and have a real sense of independence and purpose in the classroom." ■



BMS Class of 2019 Moves Up, Now BHS Class of 2023

It was a joyful night as Briarcliff Middle School eighth graders made the traditional walk to the high school for their Moving Up Ceremony.

Principal Susan Howard likened the class's first year to a roller coaster ride "with loops, flips, curves, and over in a flash," adding that the next two years had gone more smoothly and she had enjoyed the ride.

She also explained that this year's ceremony featured more student 'voice and choice' than in past years, with more speakers and some less-traditional music. Assistant Principal Amy Gladstone, who was selected by the student

body as the faculty speaker, led students in a brief mindfulness exercise.

"Take a moment and focus on the sights, sounds, and smells of this moment. Remember how you feel today," she said. "Use these memories to be inspirational and rewarding in good times and bad."

Next, five students — Madeline Wolin, Ariyanna Durrani, Alexa Fiore, Ian Gualtiere, and Noah Hirschhorn — shared their reflections. In a break from tradition, Maddie kicked off the reflections by singing "A Million Dreams" (by Benj Paseak and Justin Paul, arranged by Mac Huff). Arianna described being nervous at the start of middle school and explained how challenges each year built grit and leadership skills. Alexa touched on memories from each year and thanked the teachers for encouraging her and her classmates to take chances and not fear failing. Ian delivered a "Top 10" reflection and thank you, and Noah talked about persistence and looking ahead with gratitude. Each student's personal touch



added to the lasting memory of this special ceremony.

Diplomas were presented to each graduate by Mrs. Howard, Superintendent James Kaishian, and Board of Education President Jennifer Rosen.

Dr. Kaishian followed Maddie's lead and started out with a song and then referred back to notes he took on each of the student presenter's words reinforcing their messages and expressing pride and admiration for the wonderful accomplishments of this year's eighth grade. ■

Todd Fifth Graders Stretch Their Wings

Todd Elementary School's Moving Up Ceremony was marked by memories, music, kisses, and a special class gift.

"This class will always have a special place in my heart because your last year at Todd was my first," said Principal Colleen O'Neill-Mangan. "You each make our school a warm and caring place and you are leaving it better than you

found it. Reach for your dreams, face challenges with grace, and believe in yourselves. We certainly do!"

As a special treat for his Superintendent's remarks, Dr. James Kaishian brought two speeches and let the kids decide which one he should deliver.

He then helped each class blow thank you kisses to family members in the audience.

Fifth grade teacher Lori Fraternal took a moment to thank and recognize retiring Todd teachers Wilma Messenger and Lori Whitman. This was followed by the presentation of the class legacy gift — a printer — by class



parents Erica Ben-Zvi and Sara Siegel. A movie of memories from the year created by Lauren Lucht, and one round of "One Big Todd School Family" ended the ceremony on the perfect note. Students and attendees filed out of the Gymnasium and headed toward the Multipurpose Room for a post-ceremony reception. ■



Briarcliff High School Student Researcher Honored

Junior Chris Li represented the Briarcliff High School Science Research Team at Genius Olympiad at SUNY Oswego.

His project titled "Examination of Higher Order Restrictive and Repetitive Behaviors in Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders" received Honorable Mention in the Science Category, a recognition achieved by only the top 50 participants.

Individuals presenting in this category propose a solution which "provides understanding and solutions to environmental problems using scientific knowledge." Projects are scored on six areas: Poster Organization and Content, Literature Review, Skills and Data Management, Scientific Method, Solution (Innovation), and Oral Presentation.

The ninth annual GENIUS Olympiad, which took place June 17-22, drew students from around the globe. In all, 1,657 projects were submitted in regional competitions, with 789 accepted for the finals. The GENIUS Olympiad competition was founded by SUNY Oswego Chemistry Chair Fehmi Damkaci to promote a global understanding of environmental issues and sustainability through science, arts, creative writing, engineering, design, and business development. ■



Todd Code Fest Showcases Educator Collaboration and Student Skill Mastery

The second grade classrooms were unusually quiet given that the entire first and second grades were gathered in them for Todd Elementary School's inaugural Code Fest. Every desk, chair, table, couch, and inch of rug was in use with pairs of students diligently working on iPads solving puzzles. As simple as that scene sounds, it was a year in the making.

Code Fest was made possible by the district's 1-to-1 technology program and planning by the technology department that began in the summer of 2018. In September, Technology Mentor Tracy Campanile met with teachers to set a technology goal for the year and plan strategies and develop lesson plans to meet that goal. The second grade set the team goal of making Code Fest happen.

"Teachers were required to meet a minimum number of times with Dr. Campanile to practice and refine the skills necessary to help students succeed," said Director of Technology Erica Beasley. "I was pleased that many of them requested meeting with her far more frequently, enabling them to master the best practices and model them for their students with ease."

For students, Code Fest 2019 kicked off with each second grade classroom screening a short coding video, followed by a group

discussion about key terms like algorithms and programmers that would be used throughout the activity. The students split up into small mixed groups of first and second graders who opened the CodeSpark app on their iPads.

The teams chose avatars and began working on puzzles and recording the skills they used to solve each one, as well as how many they were

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New Board of Education Members and Officers Sworn-in

The 2019-2020 Briarcliff Schools Board of Education had its first meeting on July 2. New Board Trustee Michelle Woerner (far left) took the Oath of Office, along with newly-elected President Kenneth Torosian (far right) and Vice President Jennifer Rosen (center). Trustees Janie Chamberlain and Michael Haberman each began the second year of a three-year term.



New Assistant Principal Named

Daniel B. Goldberg has been named assistant principal of Briarcliff High School.

Mr. Goldberg comes to Briarcliff from the Albert Leonard Middle School in the City School District of New Rochelle, where he has served as assistant principal since 2016. While there, he introduced

the Safe Schools Ambassadors Program, an international program that enlists student and faculty volunteers to help prevent bullying and violence. He also implemented the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports team.

Prior to joining New Rochelle Schools, Mr. Goldberg served as the assistant principal at Clarkstown High School North in New City from 2013 to 2016. In that role, he developed and oversaw an individualized real-world work experience for seniors, called "WISE English."

Mr. Goldberg began his educational career as a social studies teacher at Clarkstown High School North in 2004. While at Clarkstown, he taught honors, college preparatory, and remedial courses as well as self-contained special education classes. He also served as head coach for varsity basketball and director of basketball



From left to right, Briarcliff High School Principal Debora French, Assistant Principal Daniel B. Goldberg, Assistant Principal Diana Blank and Superintendent James Kaishian.

teacher and educational leader, his depth of understanding of the unique and complex role of a high school assistant principal, along with his approachable demeanor and enthusiasm for education, struck a chord with those who met and interviewed him," Dr. Kaishian said.

Mr. Goldberg said he was "humbled and eager to be part of this extraordinary district" and looked forward to "providing academic experiences that are rigorous and meaningful in a safe and nurturing environment."

Mr. Goldberg holds Initial Certification as a School Building Leader from Long Island University. He earned a Masters of Art in History from Lehman College and a Bachelors of Art in Secondary Education/Social Studies from the State University of New York at New Paltz. ■

programming.

Superintendent James Kaishian said Mr. Goldberg was chosen from a field of hundreds of candidates through a comprehensive process that involved administrators, building level leaders, teachers, students and parents.

"His experience as a high school



Save the Date: June 2025

Sixth grade teacher Rob Connolly started a wonderful new tradition this year. As an end-of-year project, his class created a time capsule. Students included letters to their future selves, along with artifacts to reflect their experiences this year.

They buried the capsule in the outdoor area at Briarcliff Middle School affectionately called 'Academia,' with the plan to return in six years to unearth it when they are graduating seniors.

Principal Susan Howard reported that as she shoveled dirt into the hole, Mr. Connolly's students burst out in song, spontaneously singing "The Star Spangled Banner" to "mark the moment." ■

Kindergarten Teacher's Connection and Dedication Celebrated

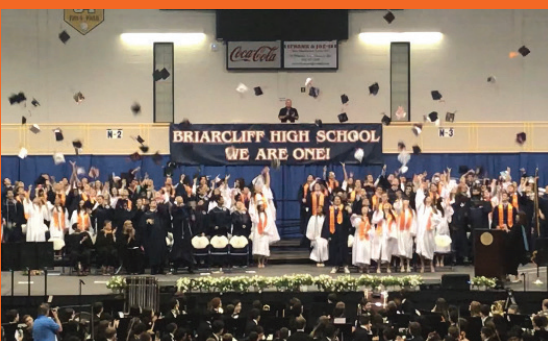


When Alyson Tully's students walked into the classroom and saw flowers and balloons on her desk, they knew there was something to celebrate but they were not sure what. The Todd kindergarten teacher explained to them that she had achieved tenure this year.

In other words, she had a long, positive history of success working with students. Mrs. Tully "has dedicated herself to creating a shared vision of an outstanding school through collaboration with students, parents, and faculty," said Todd Principal Colleen O'Neill-Mangan. "She is a caring, creative, hard-working, and engaging educator of young children."

Mrs. O'Neill-Mangan, who spoke at the June Board of Education meeting, also praised Mrs. Tully for being instrumental in implementing and supporting changes that have helped ensure the academic as well as social and emotional success of students through both the implementation of 1-to-1 devices in the classroom and a dedication to mindfulness and movement practices. ■

Highlights from Briarcliff High School Graduation 2019



Todd Code Fest Showcases Educator Collaboration and Student Skill Mastery

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able to complete. Second grader Saam Shanani's description of the activity demonstrated the depth of student understanding of the activity and assignment: "Coding is giving the computer a message to do something. You tell the computer what to do and you get to see things happen. The more you code the better things you make. We are learning how to do this now so that when we get to high school we can create more things."

Once they had finished the assigned tasks, second graders shared videos about second

grade that they had created using the Apple Clips app. The videos gave first graders a sneak peek at what life will be like next year.

"Code Fest was a unique opportunity for our second graders to showcase the coding skills they have been working on all year, and to make connections with younger students," said Michelle Kiger, a second grade teacher. "It was gratifying to watch the teams follow directions, work together, and solve complex puzzles using emerging coding skills. It truly

exemplifies what can be accomplished when the technology department and the teachers team up."

Dr. Campanile, who both watched and participated in the day's festivities, said "The students' comfort with the iPads after having used them as educational tools all year was truly on display at Code Fest. And, of course, the willingness of the first and second grade teams to plan and collaborate made it a reality." ■



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