



CommunityLink

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HAT'S OFF!

On June 26th, 508 White Plains High School students walked across the stage at the Westchester County

Center to collect their diplomas. Principal Ellen Doherty addressed the graduates, offering one last piece of advice: **“You will have opportunities every day, no matter where you are or who you’re with, to do the best thing, to choose to be kind, to be aware of the influence you command and what you mean to the people around you. Use your influence wisely.”**

Valedictorian Ross Von Doren, who will attend the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business in the fall, advised his classmates to take chances in order to make a difference. **“Risks lead to new discovery, to new technology and new resources. Don’t hesitate. Don’t wait to see if someone else does it first.”**

Salutatorian Gabriella Alexandrou encouraged fellow graduates to embrace what makes them different and unique, and then make the most of it. **“Strive to be authentic, not desperate to be popular.”** Alexandrou will attend Cornell University in the fall, with a double major in biological sciences and economics.

MOVIN’ ON UP

Earlier on the same day, 555 Highland Middle School eighth graders took part in their own

student-centered ceremony at the County Center. Students from each team – Regina Tucker, Johnny Zevallos-Vila, Kalsoom Rashid, Pilar Ceron and Diana Jimenez-Flores – offered greetings, Kristal Symonds led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Pilar Ceron offered reflections about middle school. The choir sang the national anthem and the chorus and jazz band performed a musical medley.

“We’ve had two years to really observe how uniquely talented these students are, and we’ve done our best to help them become lifelong learners,” said Highlands Principal Ernie Spatafore. **“We know they are well prepared to face the challenges of high school.”**



Salutatorian Gabriella Alexandrou and Valedictorian Ross Von Doren



Tim Connors and Peter Bassano

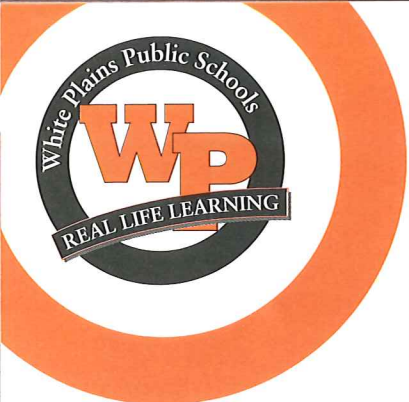
Board Honors Connors & Bassano

Superintendent of Schools Tim Connors and Board Member Peter Bassano were honored at the June 8th Board of Education meeting for their contributions to the school district. Both are retiring on June 30th.

Mr. Connors is completing his ninth year in White Plains, having served as Superinten-

dent from 2002 to 2009 and then returning in July of 2013 for two years as Interim Superintendent. Board President Rosemarie Eller thanked him for his exceptional leadership of the district and for **“keeping us on an upward trajectory.”** She described

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Connors & Bassano (cont'd from page 1)

him as **“a mentor, advisor, problem-solver and a friend to all,”** and said the entire community will miss him. She presented Mr. Connors with an engraved crystal bowl from the Board.

Mr. Bassano was first appointed to the Board of Education in August of 2002, to fill a vacated seat, and has served for 13 years. Mrs. Eller presented him with an engraved school bell and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Westchester-Putnam School Boards Association. A guiding force for

the Board, he said: **“In my years on the Board, I have had the opportunity to work with some extraordinary educators and gifted leaders – both in our schools and in our community. I have also been privileged to witness firsthand how our schools transform the lives of the beautiful youngsters in our charge and I will be forever grateful for this marvelous opportunity.”**

Both men were also recognized by the White Plains PTA Council and the White Plains Teachers' Association, which is donating books to school libraries in their honor.

School Budget Passes

The 2015-2016 school budget of \$205,800,000 was passed by the voters on May 19th with nearly 80% in favor. We are grateful to all of the members of the community, including parents and staff members, who provided valuable input during the budget process and voted to help us continue our tradition of high quality education. Thanks also to Fred Seiler, Assistant Superintendent for Business, for his hard work.

Thank You For Your Service!

The Board of Education honored eighteen retirees and eighteen 25-year staff members at its June meeting. Board President Rosemarie Eller and Superintendent of Schools Tim Connors congratulated and thanked these staff members for their years of service to the students of White Plains. They presented certificates to the following:

25 Years of Service

Jane Bailey
Roy Carroll
Yun Jing Chow
Paula Dalto
Sonia Gordon
Joan Haberman
Wendy Heanue
Mary Lincoln
Clyde Mallary
Lillian McClain
Beverly Paonessa
Linda Gale Pandolfo
Nancy Perdew
Kathryn Petruzello-Dawson
Stephanie Rosally-Kaplan
Charles Sincerbeaux
Shari Streichler
Lourdes Yannuzzi

Retirees

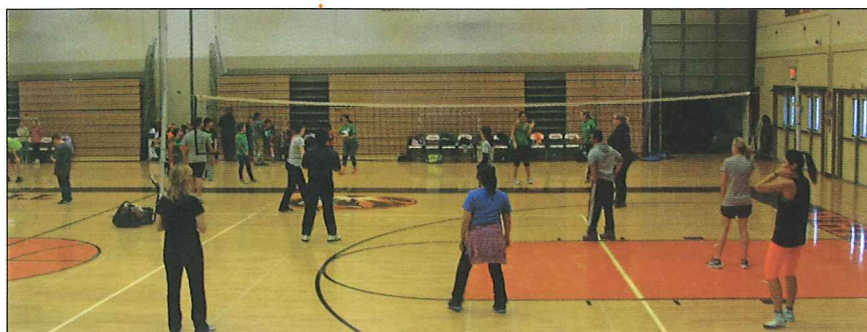
Deborah Amorosa
Mitchell Barnett
Brigida Carazo
Margaret Cavanagh
Jennifer DeSena
John Fitzsimmons
Clyde Mallary
John McGee
Narcita Medina
Elizabeth O'Brien-McKeon
Linda Gale Pandolfo
Juan Pareja
JoAnn Pettinato
Gloria Redlener
Mary Reilly
Angela Sciortino
Carol Renee
Timberlake-Brown
Peter Wood

New Board of Ed Member

James Hricay and Rose Lovitch were re-elected to the Board of Education on May 19th and Cayne Letizia was elected to a three-year term starting July 1st. A seasoned educator, Letizia was a first and third grade teacher in New York City, a Reading Specialist and Grant Coordinator in the Yonkers City School District and is currently a Reading Specialist at the Valhalla Middle School. A native of Mount Pleasant, Dr. Letizia lives in White Plains with his wife and their three children. Their eldest daughter attends Mamaroneck Avenue School, as will her younger brother who is entering kindergarten in September.



Cayne Letizia



Fundraising Fun

Parents and Staff of Post Road School faced off in a friendly volleyball tournament in April to raise funds for 5th grade moving-up activities. Students, parents and staff, along with their families, came out to support the event and cheer on the players; some made signs and dressed up in Post Road spirit-wear. About 20 parents and 20 staff members played in two simultaneous games.