Prodell Middle School student Jordan McClintock has been selected as a third-place winner in the fourth annual Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest hosted by Cablevision’s Power to Learn. The sixth-grade student’s essay answered the question put forth by the cable company about what it means to be of Latino or Hispanic heritage. Students from approximately 5,000 schools throughout Cablevision’s service area participated in the annual essay contest.

Jordan read her eloquent essay during an assembly in which she received accolades from Cablevision representative Martha Turner and New York State Assemblyman Dan Losquadro, as well as a proud show of support from Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven R. Cohen, Principal Dr. Linda Anthony, Assistant Principal Peggy Grosse, and her family and classmates. Legislator Losquadro told Jordan that it means a lot to have a winner from the school from which he graduated years prior. “Whichever country we are from, it is important to incorporate that heritage into the culture of the United States,” he told the students. “This is what makes and keeps us who we are from, it is important to incorporate that heritage into the culture of the United States,” he told the students. “This is what makes and keeps us the best country on earth.”

At the end of the assembly, Cablevision gave Jordan a new computer so she can continue to write more award-winning essays. Legislator Losquadro also presented the sixth grader with a Suffolk County proclamation for having been selected as an essay winner.

Dr. Cohen also presented the sixth grader with a Suffolk County proclamation for having been selected as an essay winner. Losquadro also presented the sixth grader with a Suffolk County proclamation for having been selected as an essay winner.
A Message from the Superintendent, Dr. Steven R. Cohen

Dear Residents,

In approximately one month, community members will vote on the proposed budget for the 2012-13 school year. As I wrote in my last superintendent’s message, the process of developing a “roll-over” budget for 2012-13 has been challenging, given the new constraints presented by the “tax levy cap” law. With this said, however, I am proud of the input provided to the administration and Board of Education by concerned community members. As this is my first true “budget cycle” with the Shoreham-Wading River School District, I was encouraged by the level of involvement in the budget meetings and truly appreciate those who attended.

With your input, we are able to present a budget to voters on Tuesday, May 15 that carries a tax levy increase of 1.75% - this is LOWER than what the tax cap allows. At the same time, the spending plan preserves essential programs and services for students.

In addition to the budget, the May 15 ballot will contain two voter propositions. Proposition 2 addresses health and safety initiatives throughout the district (see article below for a complete description), and carries no additional tax increase for district residents. Proposition 3 seeks voter authorization to establish an ex-officio, non-voting student member to the Board of Education.

In the coming weeks, residents will receive a special edition of the district newsletter, focusing entirely on the budget and associated propositions. In addition, all presentations from the budget meetings are posted on the District’s website, www.swrschools.org. I encourage you to take the time to read through the budget materials, ask questions, and most importantly, make an informed decision at the voting polls on May 15. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Dr. Steven Cohen
Superintendent of Schools

Voters to Decide on Health and Safety Proposition

On May 15, residents will have the opportunity to vote on a Health and Safety Proposition totaling $1,160,424.20. The District will utilize excess funds available in the capital fund in connection with the 2009 Health and Safety Proposition, as well as excess EXCEL aid to finance the additional health and safety projects throughout the district. These projects will include:

- Playground renovations at Briarcliff and Wading River Elementary Schools
- Building of a retaining wall at Miller Avenue
- Replacement of the High School front entrance courtyard
- District-wide security project
- Nurse’s room at Briarcliff
- Renovation of the main entrance landing at Briarcliff
- Flood abatement for Wading River’s library and Miller Avenue’s parking lot
- District-wide repairs to curbs, sidewalks and blacktops
- Related electrical, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning work and drainage systems

As noted above, the money required to complete these projects already exists, as previous projects were completed under budget. Therefore, if this proposition is approved by voters, there would be no associated tax increase.

For more information about this proposition, please log onto the District website at www.swrschools.org.

Student Spotlight

Bidawee Art Expo Winner

Thomas Palumbo, a Wading River Elementary School student, is the K-1 division winner of the 4th annual Love Your Pet Art Contest and Expo. The contest was hosted by Bidawee Learning Center in Westhampton, also an adoption center for homeless animals.

The theme for this year’s competition was showing love for your pet, pets in need of love, or animals that have positively influenced your life. Each winning art piece will be featured in the Bidawee’s monthly e-newsletter.

Underground Oil Tanks to Be Removed

As a result of a proposition that was approved during the 2010-2011 budget election, the District will move forward in removing six underground fuel oil tanks at four schools. Funding for this project came from the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund and had no tax implications for residents.

Director of Finance and Operations Glen Arcuri explained that the District has gone out to bid for this project and expects the work to be completed this summer.

Tops in Math

Graduating senior Rahul Mane placed first in Level 12 in the 19th annual Suffolk County Mathematics Tournament held at Suffolk County Community College. He accompanied 20 students from the high school, who joined over 400 participants from 28 school districts to challenge themselves in a day of team and individual competitions.

Mathletes coach Mr. Fraser and math teacher Mr. Barry accompanied the students. Raul is also one of the honors-level math students who competed in the International American Mathematics Contests, the first in a series of competitions that determine the International Mathematics Olympiad Team.
Connecting with the Community

The District believes that becoming a lifelong student in this world includes an awareness of others and reaching out to community. Through the high school’s NEXUS program, students are learning the value of connecting with those who are less fortunate, animal rescue operations, and senior citizen homes in order to become a well-rounded individual.

NEXUS advisor, Maureen Rogers, explained that the word “nexus” comes from the Latin root “to connect.” It is in this spirit of the term that any number of the club’s 175 members meet each week and travel one time per week to participate and assist in various community-building activities.

“This program is open to all students who want to attend,” Ms. Rogers explained. “The students are wonderful, and the District always receives complimentary comments about the participating students and the work they perform,” Ms. Rogers stated.

Some of this year’s activities have included trips to the Stony Brook Veterans’ Home to cook, bake or make crafts with the veterans. Students have also worked as teaching assistants at the Town of Brookhaven’s Head Start program in Coram, where they gave mini-lessons to the students and assisted in a craft to go along with the lesson. At the Head Start Program, they have also taught fire safety and donated books for the school’s library. Another favorite activity is cleaning the Bidawee animal rescue center and cages at Sweetbriar Nature Center and collecting donations for these facilities. The NEXUS members also baked soda bread for residents of the Daughters of Wisdom Assisted Living Center.

U.S. HISTORY APPS

Eleventh-grade students in Ruth Squillace’s United States History and Government class found a creative way to reinforce their newly acquired knowledge of important African American historical figures. During Black History Month, the students created a unique bulletin board in the hall of the B wing. Budding artist Asael Romero conceived the idea for President Obama to hold his iPad with apps for these important historical figures. The above students worked before and after school to paint the colorful bulletin board.

“This project was a great way to connect with the students through technology,” Ms. Squillace stated. “The students also had a really fun time strategizing and putting together the bulletin board while learning about important historical figures.”

Back from Kenya

Many of the students who made their first trip to Kenya with the high school’s Global Awareness Club did so believing they would help change lives in this impoverished nation. Instead, the students came back having had their lives changed for the better.

“You go there thinking you can help them and they change your point of view of the world,” first-time trip participant Lyn Malandrino stated.

Since 2005, students from Shoreham-Wading River High School have been accompanying social studies teacher and club advisor Kevin Mann to Kenya. Since 2009, the students have made the trip as annual representatives for the Hope Children’s Fund. In fact, senior Samantha Lacovara, who has made consecutive trips, is the first student invited to serve as a Hope Children’s Fund board member. The experiences have been so life-changing and positive that Samantha and senior Patrick Pitts are planning to expand the program in their future colleges this fall.

Samantha voiced frustration in the number of friends and peers that have complained about not having the newest gadgets. “We are very ignorant of our privileges in this country,” she stated.

In Kenya, the students spent time in the orphanage with the children and visited the schools. They even provided training in the technology center and helped the natives plant kale and spinach. A large endeavor was the hosting of a medical clinic in which doctors were recruited from Kenyan Methodist Hospital to provide dental, vision, ear, nose and throat (ENT) checkups, as well as general checkups and HIV testing.

Prior to the trip, the students also planned a Christmas celebration for the children. They brought a tree and presents, and Kevin Mann dressed as Santa! Natalia Rodrigues, also a first-time traveler, stated, “I am amazed at the bonds we created so quickly. By the last day, we felt we really knew each other.

Everyone should have an experience like this.”

On May 2, the Global Awareness Club will receive a Civic Engagement Award from United States Congressman Timothy Bishop. The club has also been nominated for a Town of Brookhaven award.

A STUDY OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND

Fifth-grade students at Miller Avenue Elementary School are starting an open space stewardship program study of the Long Island Sound under the direction of teacher Adrian Gilmore. The program will mirror a similar study by Wading River Elementary School teacher Alice Steinbrecher, whose students have been studying the Wading River Pond. To support the study, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven R. Cohen has donated $200 from a project-based learning grant.

“I am confident that this study will provide an exciting and educationally beneficial learning experience for the students for years to come,” Principal Lou Parrinello stated.

The project is in its early stages. Students have been combining English language arts and science classes by reading non-fiction books about animals that reside in the Sound’s waters. They have also written about their chosen animal and have authored a non-fiction book. This spring, the students will take their first field trip to learn about the waters that connect to the Long Island Sound.
Promoting Wellness

Throughout the United States, school districts, including Shoreham-Wading River, are trying to put a stop to bullying. During a day of assemblies and breakout groups, high school students received knowledge about ways to stop this behavior and how to protect themselves and peers from cyberbullying.

Principal Daniel Holtzman asked the students a poignant question about how they are going to change the school culture by doing things differently. “This behavior starts and stops with you,” he stated. “If bullying happens to one person, that’s too many.”

School resource officer and Suffolk County Police Officer Lou Lioio discussed the dangerous uses of webcams and the Internet and how these devices have resulted in a spike in cyberbullying reports. During an assembly, he encouraged the students to think before they post information, especially derogatory and hurtful messages. That information not only hurts the individual for whom it is intended, he explained, but will never truly disappear after being deleted. He also urged students who are being bullied online to save the information and print it as evidence of cyberbullying. That evidence should also be submitted to the police, Officer Lioio suggested.

The Stony Brook acting troupe Stories of Substance (SOS) also performed a series of vignettes about destructive decisions such as gaming addiction, boyfriend and girlfriend abuse, and bullying. Each of the stories was based on real-life incidents. After the play, the actors answered student questions and relayed the message that everyone in the room has the responsibility to make sure that all students are treated with respect.

AJK Diversified President Alisty Joy Keneth, who calls herself the “Hater Deflater,” also visited each grade level to speak about the issue of bullying. She discussed the scope of bullying and how to determine whether a friend or family member is being bullied. She also pointed out that it is important to take a good, hard look at ourselves and to determine where we learn mean and antisocial behavior. The culminating activity with Ms. Keneth included the creation of a plan of action to help promote positive behavior between peer groups.
Promoting Wellness, cont'd

Middle School Hosts Wellness Week

A weeklong physical education unit introduced middle school students to different aspects of physical fitness and commenced with the annual Wellness Fair. Groups of students researched hundreds of activities that included hip-hop dancing, Pilates, karate, jumping rope, and party dancing, before presenting their findings to their classmates with a poster and demonstration of their chosen activity.

During the week, physical education classes tried Zumba, Tai Chi and yoga and learned about the wellness benefits of biking. Principal Dr. Linda Anthony even taught a yoga class! The students also attended an assembly about bullying with Suffolk County Police Office Nancy Ward and were able to access information about bullying at an information table provided by school social worker Andrea Monz. During science classes, guidance counselors Jen Ranellone and Kelly Young also spoke to the students about cyberbullying and the technology behind this criminal activity.

The Long Island Dietetic Association guided students about nutrition and set up a nutrition table for the school to become more aware of the sugar, fat, and high-calorie foods that prevent optimum health.

Physical education teacher Allison DeMarco explained that students often have the misconception that physical fitness only includes sports. “We want the students to expand their minds and become knowledgeable about other fitness activities and good nutrition to achieve a healthy lifestyle,” Ms. DeMarco stated.

Let’s Skate!

Innovative physical education units are the norm for District elementary students. Physical education teachers have, once more, taken fitness to a new level. For two weeks this winter, the students donned helmets, knee and elbow pads, and roller skates for one of their favorite exercise activities.

The District has collected numerous donations of equipment for this program and the students were allowed to bring their personal skates or roller blades to class. The teachers then pumped up the music while the skaters made their way around a contrived roller rink. A bench was placed in the middle of the rink for skaters to rest.

Briarcliff physical education teacher Di Gilroy explained that after the two weeks were over, the teachers really noticed the heightened physical fitness abilities that skating provides. Not only did skating offer a great aerobic workout, it also assisted these young skaters with strengthened muscles and balance.

More Alike Than Different

Miller Avenue students are even more empathetic to other students’ disabilities after attending the Disability Awareness Fair hosted by the Suffolk Individual Living Organization (SILO). During this innovative venue, the students learned about guide dogs, technology for the disabled, and other ordinary items that have been altered to help those who are blind or deaf. The students were able to pet and brush actual dogs provided by the Guide Dog Foundation. In addition, they discussed with occupational therapists from Touro Hospital, the need for optimism for those with a disability, respect for those who are disabled, and the negative connotations with the word “retarded.” Students from the Mill Neck School of the Deaf also made a visit and taught the students sign language.
Raising a Bookworm

The District understands the impact of the home connection to student success as early readers and the importance of instilling a love of literacy prior to being enrolled in school. In an attempt to raise future bookworms, preschool students, accompanied by their parents and siblings, were invited to Briarcliff Elementary School for a weekend reading event. Through the Raise a Bookworm program, the preschool children were paired with first-grade reading buddies and read books either brought from home or found in the classroom. The youngsters also colored a picture with the first-grade students as a way of getting to know their new friends.

“This is one of the students’ first experiences at Briarcliff Elementary School,” Director of Curriculum and Instruction Alan Meinster explained. “Not only does the event encourage a love of literacy, it also helps make these future students comfortable in their new surroundings.”

Approximately 50 children attended the event and were paired with as many first-grade students from Briarcliff and Wading River Elementary Schools. The classrooms hummed with the sound of readers, who piled on the floors and sat in some classroom reading nooks. In each of the classrooms, kindergarten teachers then read an engaging story to the groups of students and their new buddies. This was an excellent way for the future kindergarten students to experience group story time.

Principal Patricia Nugent stated that the event was extremely successful and that this experience will help build a foundation for future learning experiences at Briarcliff Elementary School.

The goal of Raise a Bookworm is to create a community culture of literacy through reading during infancy. The initiative is part of a new District literacy program, Grow Bookworms, which Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven R. Cohen is attempting to expand.

If you would like to submit the name of a newborn or baptized child and the parent’s information, please contact Mary Luhrs at the Office of the Superintendent at (631) 821-8105 or mluhrs@swr.k12.ny.us. The parents will receive a book to read to their child during infancy.

Stage Presence

All the world was a stage for Miller Avenue and Wading River Elementary Schools as students showcased their acting and singing talents on stage during the schools’ annual plays. This year, Miller Avenue students spent many weeks perfecting their performance of Alice in Wonderland. Based on the original story, the cast of characters included the King of Hearts, Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, the Red Queen and, of course, Alice.

For Wading River Elementary School, beloved children’s book characters from The Phantom Tollbooth, written by Norton Juster, came to life. The Phantom Tollbooth, Jr. is the tale of a boy named Milo who must save the princesses, Rhyme and Reason, and reunite the brother kings who rule over the cities of Dictionopolis and Digitopolis. During his journey, Milo brings harmony to the Land of Wisdom and learns about words and numbers. His most important lesson, however, is that everything we learn has a purpose, and that everything we do affects others.
Elementary school students throughout the District celebrated the first 100 days of school through an array of activities. In many of the classrooms, the students rotated to stations where they counted cereal and constructed a necklace, crafted colorful 100-Day glasses, or calculated the number “100” during mathematical counting activities. Teachers also encouraged the students to count to 100 by 5’s, 10’s, and 20’s and to calculate the number 100 by tallying on a number line. The younger kindergarten students also made 100-Day hats, which they wore in celebration of this special day.

Middle School students enrolled in Sharon Kommar’s French classes had the unique opportunity to practice their French language skills firsthand. Eighteen students and their parent chaperone travelled to Quebec and Montreal. For some, this was the first time travelling to a foreign country.

During a presentation to the middle school’s sixth-grade French students, the international student-travelers related their experiences in both cities. They spoke about the beauty of an ice castle, shopping in a high-end mall in Montreal, and riding behind sled dogs in the snowy countryside. The students also hiked in snowshoes, and learned some native dances while mingling with the locals at a community center. Of course, they also used their French language skills!

The younger students asked whether they felt like they were in a foreign country, since Canada borders the United States. The students answered that the frequently spoken French language and a difference in clothing reminded them that they were not in the United States.

Learning about money at an early age can have its advantages. During a performing arts assembly, students at Wading River Elementary School attended Funance, a creative and informational program that identified the difference between needs and wants and taught students about budgets and spending plans, how and why to save money, the history of money, financial goals, and debt. Older students even learned about credit cards. Created by former circus performer Brad Zupp, the assembly engaged the students with his juggling acts, plate spinning and magic. Several students even played the roles of “Savagator” and “Spendosaurus” to illustrate many of the program’s important points about money.

Elementary school students paid homage to the traditional weather forecasting of Punxsutawney Phil by participating in educational activities that combined art, math, and science. At Briarcliff Elementary School, kindergarten students in Robin Nicroci’s class studied groundhogs and read a book by Susan Korman entitled Wake Up, Groundhog! The unit culminated in the crafting of groundhog shadows out of construction paper. The students practiced tracing and using scissors as they traced, cut out, and decorated brown groundhogs with a black construction paper shadow.

Since 2003, Kindergarten teacher Regina Hoppey has been making predictions about whether the groundhog would see his shadow. Her class put their knowledge of prediction and graphing to the test. During this combined art, science, and math activity, the students first decorated groundhog cutouts and placed them on a board under the words “yes” and “no,” depending on whether the student believed the groundhog would see his shadow. This activity was an opportunity to discuss how some predictions do not come true. The activity culminated with the coloring of bar graphs that showed where opinions were equal in number and how many differed.
Congratulations to the following athletes who secured honors for the winter season:

**BOYS BASKETBALL**
Robert Bray – All-League
John Kovach – All-League, All-Conference
Chris Mahoney – Academic All-League
Kevin Turano – All-League

**GIRLS BASKETBALL** – Scholar-Athlete Team
Courtney Clasen – Rookie of the Year/League VI
Meghan King – All-League
Shannon Rosati – All-League
Taylor Whitten – All-League

**BOYS WINTER TRACK** – Scholar-Athlete Team, Placed Third in League, Placed Third in County
Tyler Keys – All-League, All-Conference, and All-County
John Lee – All-League, All-Conference, All-League Champ in 3200m run, Winner of Meet of Champions/Suffolk vs. Nassau All-Stars, Won 3200m run at St. Anthony’s Invitational, All-County, and Scholar-Athlete Award
Max Maritato – All-League
Tom Sager – All-League, All-Conference, All-County, and Pole Vault League Champ
Ryan Udvadia – All-League and All-Conference

**GIRLS WINTER TRACK** – Scholar-Athlete Team, League Relays Champions, Small School County 4x400 Champions
Genevieve Kuczewski – All-County Small School 1st Team Champ in the 4x400m and All-County Academic
Laura Lee – All-League 1st Team/1000m, All-County Small School 1st Team Champ/4x400m
Kyle Trettner – All-League 1st Team/1500m and All-League Racewalk Champ
Shannon McDonnell – All-League 1st Team, All-League Long Jump Champ, All-League 600m Champ, All-State, All-County 1st Team/600m, Academic All-County, and All-County Small School 1st Team Champ in the 600m and 4x400m
Kaitlin Ohrmann – All-League 1st Team/3000m
Kerri Madsen – All-League 2nd Team in the 1500m Racewalk
Kaitlyn Stanton-Taddeo – All-County Small School 1st Team Champ/4x400m and All-County Academic

**WRESTLING** – Scholar-Athlete Team, League VI Champs, Copiague Tournament Champions, Battle for the Harbor Duals Champions, Newburgh Duals Champions
Joseph Bennett – All-League and League Champion (170 lbs)
Dan Devoito – All-League
T.J. Fabian – All-League, All-County, All-State, and League Champion (120 lbs)
Max Goldfarb – All-League
T.J. Fabian – All-League, All-County, All-State, and League Champion (120 lbs)
Max Goldfarb – All-League
John Keck – All-League, All-County, All-State, and League Champion (152 lbs)
Christopher Milette – All-League
Zak Mullen – All-League, All-County, All-State, and League Champion (160 lbs)
Dominic Pirraglia – All-League
James Szymanski – All-League
Jack Taddeo – All-League

*View The District’s Interactive Calendar*

The District encourages its residents to utilize our interactive calendars located on the District’s website. There are several formats in which to view the interactive calendar:
- District-wide
- By school
- Board of Education meetings and activities
- Community programs

By visiting the interactive calendar, located under the calendar drop down menu on the main page of the District’s website, residents will be able to find all current information with regard to programs, performances and meetings throughout the District, including community program activities!

Please visit www.swrschools.org and stay on top of the up-to-the-minute calendar information!

*Changes Approved on the Athletic Field*

The Board of Education has approved “in spirit” upgrades to the high school athletic field. The changes will include a press box with a viewing platform, ADA-compliant restrooms, and a concession stand-ready structure, stated District Director of Finance and Operations Glen Arcuri. The District is waiting for contracts from contractors and an architect and hopes that the work will start this summer.

This project is the brainchild of residents Tommy Pirraglia and Chris Rosati, who have proposed a three-step project that will also include stadium lights and an artificial turf field. The two men have already started a fundraising project to raise $750,000 to complete the project.