

The Bulletin Board

News from the Hicksville UFSD

Marching Comets Round Out Successful Season

The 2021 marching band season was a tremendous success for the Hicksville High School Marching Comets. After rehearsing throughout the entire summer, the group participated in several competitions during the fall. Their efforts culminated in the New York State Field Band Conference Championship held at Syracuse University, where the Comets captured first place in their class. Their production, titled "Car-Man," was a unique combination of songs, including "Greased Lightnin'," "Driver's License" and the opera "Carmen."

Achieving this great honor took months of preparation, collaboration and dedication from the entire marching band program. Marching Band Director Kerri Barnett attributes the group's success to strong parent support and passionate student leaders.

"We are very fortunate to have a large group of Band Parent Association volunteers, who dedicated so much time and effort to making each competition and rehearsal successful for our students," Ms. Barnett said. "Our 'student staff' dedicated their time to building their leadership skills, as well."

While winning the state title was a momentous accomplishment, this season also

held special meaning for the band. "After a year of being off due to COVID-19, this year has been extremely special for all performing ensembles to have a sense of normalcy once again," Ms. Barnett said.

Brass Section Leader Connor Sullivan offered similar sentiments. "After a rough year of being virtual, being able to come back, perform and take a victory is just amazing," he said.

Ms. Barnett notes that marching band is so much more than the eight-minute performance that the band perfects over the course of the season. It brings a comfortable space for students to develop socially and emotionally and find a sense of belonging. "In such a short period of time, you see students grow confidence and gain skills that they can take with them into adulthood," Ms. Barnett said.

While the 2021 marching band season may be over, the Comets will continue to soar. They look forward to their participation in the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade this March, and then to welcoming new band members for the upcoming 2022 season!

The district once again congratulates the entire marching band family for their continued success.

Being a member of the Hicksville Marching Comets is really just being a member of a massive family, one that has your back when you have theirs.

—Gustavo Balaguera

To me, marching band is not just a 'marching band.' It's a family with memories that are unforgettable.

— Student

Marching band is a second family to me. It is a way for me to enjoy doing what I love but also learn new values and lessons that will later help in life.

—Mariana Morales





Student artwork on display at Broadway Mall.



OCR student Hailyn Mathew displays her artwork created as part of the Memory Project.



Artwork by student Martina Gonzalez on display at Broadway Mall.



Artwork, titled "Staple City" by Class of '21 graduate Siddh Agarwa, on display at Broadway Mall.

Spotlight on the Visual Arts

From the time students enter Hicksville Public Schools, they are immersed in a curriculum that offers a variety of learning opportunities – from the core subjects of English, science, math and social studies – to courses in business, technology and world languages, among others.

Central to these strong academic and co-curricular offerings is a robust visual arts program, beginning at the elementary level. “By introducing the visual arts to students at a young age, it helps to develop their creativity, imagination and critical thinking skills,” said Supervisor of Fine Arts Chad Wyman.

Students in grades K-5 spend one class period a week immersed in the arts, during which they learn basic artistic principles. In addition, they are provided with numerous opportunities to spotlight their artwork in the community.

As students progress to the secondary level, they are provided with the opportunity to enroll in 17 different art courses, ranging from classes in 2D and 3D art to offerings in the visual and digital arts. “Hicksville offers an immersive experience in the arts that is unrivaled by most other districts in our region,” Mr. Wyman said. “This wide range of offerings provides our students with the skills necessary to succeed in hundreds of careers in our global society.”

In addition to these courses, students can foster their interest in the visual arts through participation in the middle and high school’s after-school art club. Through this, students are provided opportunities to create art in the greater Hicksville community.

“Linking students to our local, regional and global communities through the arts is a vital part of our district’s program,” Mr. Wyman said.

Locally, the district partners with numerous organizations and businesses to display student artwork, including a recent display at Broadway Mall for Hicksville Middle and High School students.

Broadening the district’s artistic reach, several schools throughout the district participate in the Memory Project each year, a youth arts organization that promotes intercultural understanding and kindness between children around the world. As part of the Memory Project, participating schools are provided with photos of children around the world who are facing various types of challenges. Students from the home school then create a portrait of their assigned child, which is then mailed to them.

This year, students at Old Country Road Elementary School and Hicksville High School are contributing to the Memory Project. “Our students benefit by participating in this endeavor in so many ways,” said Coordinator of Elementary and High School Art Michelle Lesser. “Not only do they expand their artistic skills, but it is a wonderful opportunity to give something to someone less fortunate than themselves.”

“I thank the entire Hicksville community for its continued support of our artistic efforts,” Mr. Wyman said. “Through this ongoing support, we offer one of the most extensive lists of art courses throughout our region.”

OUTSTANDING ARTISTS

Our student-artists and staff receive numerous recognitions for their talents each year. Below are just a few of their many recent accomplishments!

- Student Amber Corbett was selected as Scholar Artist for Nassau County.
- The following students were accepted into the Adelphi University “For the Love of Art” 10-week drawing program. From Ms. Lesser’s classes: Ying Yu Ma, Megan Mayo and Emelly Turcios. From Ms. Andolina’s classes: Michael Losquadro and Surag Karki. From Mr. Mateyunas’s classes: Krista Castillo, Jazmin Corrujedo and Sabal Sohail.
- The Art Honor Society worked on drawings inspired by the “Inktober” prompts. These drawings are on the NAHS Instagram.
- Lily Wagner was accepted into the Nassau County High School Art Exhibit sponsored by the Art Guild. She received an honorable mention for her work.
- Jazmin Corrujedo was accepted into the juried art exhibition, *Nightmare on Main Street*, sponsored by the Huntington Arts Council.
- The following members of Art Honor Society won the Fire Safety Poster Contest: Jazmin Corrujedo, Jessica Janickey, Miguel Ortiz and Amelia Valdez.
- All art teachers entered artwork in the members’ exhibit at the New York State Art Teachers Association conference. Ms. Lesser took third place.
- Craig Mateyunas was named Region IX art teacher of the year in New York State.

Promoting a Kind and Inclusive Environment



Several years ago, the district implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program within all schools as a way of promoting a kind and inclusive environment for all students. The program focuses on creating a safe and positive school environment by improving peer relations.

Since the start of the 2021-22 school year, schools throughout the district have each been involved in hosting a number of activities and initiatives for students as part of these efforts. At the elementary level, students were introduced to the program at the beginning of the year and reviewed the main rules, which include helping others who are being bullied, telling an adult if someone is being bullied and including students who are left out.

Elementary students have also participated in events such as Kindness Bingo, Unity Day and assemblies that promote good behavior and doing the right thing. At Lee Avenue Elementary School, students also decorated American flags and wrote about a fellow classmate who is a hero to them. At East Street, students began the year by cutting out paper hands to give to their classmates when they are caught doing an act of kindness. The student then writes their name on the paper hand to be put on display on a bulletin board in the building.

Each elementary building has plans in store for the coming months to support the Olweus program, such as decorating a heart for Valentine’s Day with one of the program’s “golden rules.”

“By implementing the Olweus programs, we have opened up the lines of communication among students, allowing them to express their concerns and provide opportunities to stand up for one another,” said Superintendent of Schools Ms. Marianne Litzman.

The district’s efforts in this area continue on the secondary level, as well. Highlights of our middle and high school program will be shared in the spring Bulletin Board.

THE HICKSVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Administration Building
200 Division Avenue
Hicksville, NY 11801

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ALUMNI *Spotlight*

ROMAN FEESER

Hicksville High School Class of 1992

Q: How is working as a producer for the CBS "Sunday Morning" with Jane Pauley show?

A: Working for CBS "Sunday Morning" with Jane Pauley is a dream come true. The show has a very unique structure in storytelling, one you don't find anywhere else on television. But I shouldn't use the word 'working.' I truly love what I do and it never feels like work.

Q: What was it like winning two Emmy Awards for your work on the Jane Pauley show?

A: I never got into journalism thinking, 'I'm doing this to win awards.' It's never been the eye on the prize; it's about producing good work. Work that makes an impact, motivates, educates. Of course, when it happens, you're like, 'Is this real? Is my name really on this thing?!' I'm just this guy from Hicksville, New York. That happened with the first and the second. But you're only as good as the last thing you produce, so the bar gets set higher and you have to keep reaching for it.

Q: What was your role when you worked for Scholastic?

A: I worked for Scholastic as the director of corporate production. My job was to create original digital content for the classroom that was free to teachers and students. Scholastic gave me a good education in the digital content world. I feel lucky to have been part of a piece we did last year on "Sunday Morning" about the company and its CEO Richard Robinson, who passed away months after shooting. It came full circle for me. It was a rare opportunity.

Q: Can you explain how being a student at Hicksville Public Schools benefited you?

A: The arts programs at Hicksville High School were the foundation for my success. I would never have gotten this far in my life without the training from the drama program and the music program. It's where I gravitated; it's where I thrived. I was pushed to be my best, and teachers

like Judith Pasetliner and Chuck Arnold saw that potential and encouraged my talent. I was lucky to have educators that saw that in me and used their tools to get the most out of me.

Q: What advice do you have for kids who are attending Hicksville Public Schools?

A: This is a tough question. I know as a high schooler life and family are pulling you in every direction. You are getting advice on who and what you should be, what you should do. I always took that advice but I also listened to my heart, evolved my passions and took a lot of chances. Don't make any decisions now. Experience as much of what life has to offer. There's plenty of time to figure out what you were put on the Earth to do. Once you figure it out, don't stop till you get it. Then, never stop evolving.

