



# Levittown LEADER

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## Growing THROUGH ADVERSITY

It is safe to say that this year has been anything but ordinary. As a district, we have navigated through uncharted territory and have worked together to overcome many obstacles during this global pandemic. With springtime upon us, now is the time for a fresh start. As we look ahead to new beginnings, such as the return to in-person learning for all of our secondary students, it is important for us to reflect on how we got to today. It is easy to be caught up in a negative headspace while living through challenging times; however, there are many positive lessons that have come to light from this year of change.

Before the start of the 2020-2021 school year, the district developed a comprehensive reopening plan featuring health and safety protocols, instructional models and more. Despite the new practices in place, our administrators, staff and teachers held their heads high while they worked to continue to make education a priority. A pandemic could not stop our educators from

providing opportunities for "Success for Every Student." They conquered this through professional development workshops and the expansion of new educational learning tools, making them stronger individuals, leaders and teachers.

Whether from a computer screen or socially distant in a classroom, students engaged in new creative lessons throughout the year which may not have come to fruition if not for the circumstances surrounding

COVID-19. They have embraced new educational technology tools, connected with their peers in new ways and have found the means to grow, both academically and socially, despite the nontraditional school routine. Moving away from traditional classroom routines featuring physical interaction has made our students and staff develop an appreciation for what once was. Like the rest of the world, our hope is that we can bring back that normalcy soon.

In addition, the pandemic has allowed our school communities to show their character and give back to others in fresh new ways. Students have practiced kindness and empathy through schoolwide fundraisers and projects. They have recognized the hard work of the heroes right in our own backyard such as school nurses and custodial workers. Classes have also celebrated health care workers out in the field who have been battling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These lessons of compassion have helped our students grow into more well-rounded individuals.

The year has allowed each member of our Levittown school community to pave their own path. Our students have found pockets of light in times of darkness (see pages 2 and 3 of this Levittown Leader for their stories). Although we do not know what the future holds, we encourage everyone to reflect on what this past year has taught them and keep a positive outlook on what is to come.



"Even though we have to social distance this year, we can still have fun learning and helping our friends in class. We love going on our Chromebooks throughout the day in school. While using our laptops, we are able to complete classwork, work on projects, create stories and so much more with our classmates." – Thomas Feehan, Third Grade, Northside Elementary School



"I learned that math can be fun. We play math games using our Chromebooks and whiteboards, solve problems and earn Class Dojo points." – Liliana Mirza, Second Grade, Lee Road Elementary School



"I believe that a positive thing that I learned this year was how to work together with my peers even when they are remote. This is because it gives me a different perspective on what we are working on and how to do it better." – Daniel Lang, Eighth Grade, Wisdom Lane Middle School



"One of the positive things I learned was to never give up. It may be hard at the moment, but trust me, it gets better. I know this because it happened to me. At the beginning of the school year, I did not want to go to school because there was no point. We had to stay 6 feet apart and wear a mask. Then, I walked through the classroom door and I saw my friends and my teacher. A smile spread across my face even though nobody could see it. All the negative feelings and sadness left me in no time. My friends made me happy and smile, and my teacher brought me to a whole other level of reading." – Sadie Villaume, Fourth Grade, Abbey Lane Elementary School



"You need to live in the moment. You may not know when you are going to get another moment or opportunity again. You have to really take that risk, go outside your comfort zone or simply just cherish the little and big things in your life, because you may not get it again. During the pandemic, not knowing what was going to happen next was what really made me recognize this. It made me look back and reflect on so many times and experiences and wonder if I would ever get those again. Going back to school, I promised myself I would step out of my shell and experience and do things I was always too afraid or nervous to do. Learning such a positive lesson from a negative situation has really allowed me to become even more of myself in a way." – Samantha Snevily, Senior, Division Avenue High School

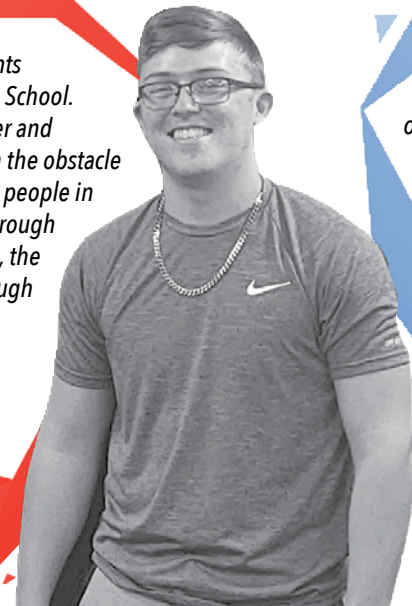


# What is one **POSITIVE THING** that you have learned this school year?

"One positive thing that I've learned this year is how to start conversations with my friends and other people in school. I used to not really talk a lot in school. This year I've gained confidence to speak up and I have had a lot of fun doing that this year. This is a positive thing because it will help me in the future when I am interacting with people." – Maxwell Cullen, Fifth Grade, Gardiners Avenue School



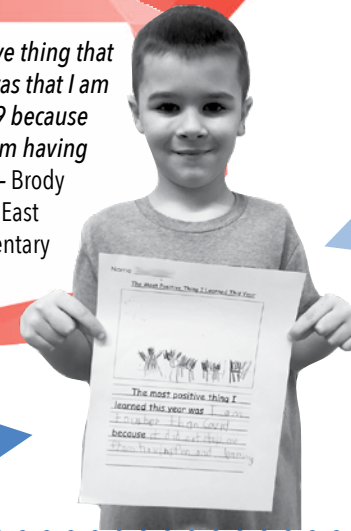
"I've learned how strong the students and staff are here at MacArthur High School. I learned that we can all come together and achieve academic success even through the obstacle of remote learning. The integrity that the people in our school possess is like no other. Even through quarantining and hybrid learning, my peers, the staff and I have been working together through these unprecedented times." – Kevin Walther, Senior, General Douglas MacArthur High School



"I learned the importance of perseverance. If you fall down once or twice, keep trying. No matter what happens you need to move forward and be prepared for these situations. It is important to always keep trying." – Kevin Tierney, Seventh Grader, Jonas E. Salk Middle School



"The most positive thing that I learned this year was that I am tougher than COVID-19 because it did not stop me from having fun and learning." – Brody Mehr, First Grade, East Broadway Elementary School



"I have learned a lot of awesome things this year – two of the great things are script and a bunch of math topics. Script is one because I enjoy it, I am good at it and it can help me when I am older because I might have to sign my name on things. Math is very helpful in life and it is kind of like script because you do it in a lot of grades and when you're older." – Kerry McKinney, Third Grade, Summit Lane Elementary School



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## Residential Customer



Northside students and staff celebrated Music in Our Schools Month by wearing music T-shirts every Monday. (L-R) Music teacher Christopher Rispoli, student Dylan Toffolo and music teacher Isabella McClancy.



As part of the district's Summer Reading Extravaganza, the English department hosted its 2021 winter showcase for summer reading, Lights! Camera! Kindness!, for all students at Jonas E. Salk Middle School and Wisdom Lane Middle School. Students were encouraged to submit videos connecting to the message of their 2020 summer reading book, "Pay It Forward" by Catherine Ryan Hyde, and were recognized with a medal for their leadership. Pictured is Jonas E. Salk Middle School seventh grader James DeLillo wearing his medal for his video of the Tyler's Teddies Kindness Movement.



East Broadway first graders read "Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon" by Patty Lovell, along with the poem "Sunny Sunflower." They then created their own sunflowers featuring facts that make them special. Pictured is first grader Lily Pina with her beautiful sunflower.

# School Snapshots



### Abbey Lane Elementary School

Second grade students learned that anyone can be a kind and compassionate hero after reading "Dex: The Heart of a Hero" by Caralyn Buehner. Each student thought of something personal in their lives that they were particularly proud of and developed their own superhero identity. They celebrated their new superhero status by dressing as their superhero identity and sharing their superpower with others.

### Division Avenue High School

Freshman Sabaa Khan took home first place with her team in the level one category of a virtual Code-A-Thon, sponsored by the nonprofit organization We Connect The Dots. The competition, which featured three levels of difficulty, took place during the course of three days and challenged students to create websites that would offer a solution to a societal issue.

### East Broadway Elementary School

Students participated in Random Acts of Kindness Week. Members of the East Broadway PAX Ambassador Club challenged the school community to work hard, show kindness and make the school a better place. Good deeds were shared on purple hearts and displayed in the school hallway. At the end of the week, the club members read through the paper hearts and selected nine students to receive the Polar Bear Award for their outstanding kindness.

### Gardiners Avenue Elementary School

Student council members raised \$297 for the Wounded Warrior Project. They encouraged families to purchase and decorate a paper heart to support their fundraiser. Afterwards, the members displayed the beautifully decorated hearts in the school's main hallways for all to see and enjoy.

### Lee Road Elementary School

Music teacher Helen Papayannakos introduced American Sign Language into her music classrooms to adhere to safety protocols, while still giving students a new and exciting way to experience music. The ASL lessons quickly expanded throughout the Lee Road community and students embraced what they had learned outside of the classroom.

### General Douglas MacArthur High School

Six students participated in the Medical Marvels Conference, hosted by Northwell Health. Valerie Bonavita, Michael Cassano, Ana Compton, Rylie Lubliner, Natalia Pzenciczny and Grace Ryan were tasked with providing innovative technological and health-based solutions, as well as a public policy strategy, to solve the nation's gun violence problems. In addition to writing papers, presenting findings and engaging in a Q&A session, the students participated in workshops and lectures.

### Northside Elementary School

Fourth graders in Carol Clingen's class created a student line-plot gallery based on data that they took of their classmates. After constructing their line plots, they

formed math questions for their peers to answer. The students were responsible for correcting their classmates' responses.

### Jonas E. Salk Middle School

Eighteen students put their creativity and kindness to the test during the school's Tyler's Teddies Virtual Art Night. The event was facilitated by English teacher Michele Witte and art teacher Amanda Davidson over Google Meet. Students learned how to draw a teddy bear and then took a photo of their creation. They shared their drawings with friends and family while encouraging them to do something kind to pay it forward.

### Summit Lane Elementary School

Fifth graders in Jennifer O'Brien and Parbatee ChuCheong's class celebrated Read Across America Week by reading books and dressing up according to specific themed days. Students also completed reading logs and had the chance to win great prizes.

### Wisdom Lane Middle School

The eighth grade Science Olympiad team earned fourth place in the Western Long Island Regional Tournament and qualified for the New York State tournament in April.



Spring 2021

Success for Every Student!

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