

Winter News from Island Trees Middle and High School

Submitted By: Brittany Lahti

Winter has been a season filled with hard work and giving for students and staff members at Island Trees Memorial Middle School and High School. Throughout the months of December and January, fundraisers were hosted, field trips were held, and memorable academic activities occurred.

The Middle School and High School have begun raffling off gift baskets on Fridays to help support families in financial need. Every week a different department is making a basket and the proceeds will be used to help our families year-round. Teacher and staff contributions totaled \$665 dollars. The Guidance Department will use these funds to support needy families within the Island Trees School District.

At Island Trees High School, the World Language Honor Society inducted 53 members (43-Spanish and 10-French). An alumni, Kaitlin Anselmo (class of 2011), came back as a guest speaker to talk about using her French skills to live in Paris, join the Peace Corps, live in Africa and is now an international grant writer. Social Studies classes at the middle school participated in the National History Bee. 224 students qualified for the Regional Competition. The National Junior Art Honor Society and the Sketchbook Club created winter themed ornaments during the holiday season. The Art Honor Society officers lead the workshops to create ornaments with members and invited guests. The high school guidance department sponsored a BOCES fair on January 5th. Teachers and students from GC Tech and Barry Tech were represented to showcase their programs and answer questions. It was a great day!

On December 19th, the fifth grade classes traveled to the Seaford Cinemas to view *Wonka!* The film was a delight to all and inspired us to allow our creativity to guide us in our writing. Students in English 12-Science Fiction/Horror went on a field trip to see the new horror movie *Thanksgiving*. The movie served as an introduction to the horror unit. Forensics students traveled to the David S. Mack Center for Training and Intelligence. This trip was especially beneficial for students interested in pursuing a major in criminal justice or those with an aspiring desire to be a part of the law enforcement field. The fifth grade also received hands-on experience working with artifacts and primary sources from the NY Historical Society on January 16th. While working with historical artifacts, students learned how to observe, interpret and make inferences about objects told stories involving our country's history. This in-school workshop shed light on the importance of learning from the past and thinking outside the box!

Ms. Goldstein and Ms. Rosenking's eighth grade Science Enrichment classes have been working hard on their research projects that they submit to the national eCYBERMISSION competition in March. Students have been working in groups since October to create a solution to an important issue in their community. In Ms. Goldstein's class, some of the community issues that these groups have been tackling include: lowering stress and improving sleep using essential oils, preventing bacterial infections in wounds using essential oils, creating shock absorbing gear/barriers while riding a bike/bus, using plants to reduce carbon monoxide levels, and creating cooling vests for high heat athletic events. In Ms. Rosenking's class, some of the community issues that these groups have been tackling include: creating an effective gum remover from household materials, providing heating and cooling features to a football helmet to decrease heat stroke and hypothermia in athletes exposed to extreme temperatures, designing an LED smoke alarm in order to proactively determine the location of potential fires, identify lotions and butters that prove to be antimicrobial/antibacterial to be used by burn victims and creating an insulated box/home to lessen the harmful effects of extreme temperatures on stray animals.

At Island Trees High School, the Robotics Team and their advisors applied for and secured a \$2,500 grant from the Gene Haas Foundation to further grow the program. It was used to purchase a new swerve drive system which will elevate our robot to better compete at Hofstra this spring. The Key Club and their advisors coordinated a campaign in the library for Cards for Hospitalized Kids where all students were encouraged to create positive cards that are shared with children staying in hospitals during the holiday season. The Key Club also donated 150 toys to the John Theissen Children's Foundation. This year, several teachers and 82 tenth grade girls participated in the Beautiful Me program. It was the most successful year so far. The teachers at Island Trees High School thank the PTSA for providing a beautiful breakfast for the girls.

The Chamber Orchestra, led by Ms. McGrory, played holiday music at Nassau County Medical Center then delivered toys to patients on the pediatric floor during the holiday season. Chamber Orchestra members also arrived at school early to welcome all students and staff members with holiday music as they walked into the lobby. The orchestra, band and chorus continued the tradition of visiting the guidance and main office during the week before winter break to play holiday music for the faculty. The teachers of Island Trees are proud of the 23 students in grades 5-12 that performed at the NMEA All-County festival at the Tilles Center during the first two weekends in January.

The United Teachers of Island Trees thank the community for their continued support. We cannot wait to share the exciting events planned for students and the community throughout the remainder of the school year.