

February News from the United Teachers of Island Trees

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Throughout the month of February, the teachers and staff members within Island Trees School District have hosted fundraisers, raising close to \$7,000 for the community. They also created hands-on, memorable learning experiences for students throughout the buildings.

In February, J. Fred Sparke Elementary School hosted Family Math Night. Kindergarten and First Grade students and family members were invited in to play engaging math games, spotlighting the skills that students are taught within the classroom. Fun was had by all in attendance. Throughout the school day, students participated in *Crack the Code* and math exploration activities. Staff members at Sparke also began a before school program, teaching students how to play cooperatively. Students are learning how to win and lose gracefully. February was a month of fundraising and food drives at Sparke. As a building, over 230 pounds of soup were collected for the annual *Soup'er Bowl* food drive. In addition, \$114 was raised and donated to the *Go Red for Women*, which is a national movement by *The American Heart Association* to end heart disease and strokes in women. Finally, a fundraiser was hosted for a former beloved colleague, Colleen Truono. The fundraiser was hosted at *Governors*, and over \$4,000 was raised.

At Michael F. Stokes Elementary School third graders participated in the first annual *Living Wax Museum*. As part of the nonfiction reading unit, students studied a biography of an influential person from the past (or present). Students chose athletes, scientists, musicians, and scholars from the past and present. Students wrote a biography report about their individual, created a speech based on their biography, and "became" that person during the living wax museum event. Second and fourth grade students were in awe of the living wax figures, as were parents, administrators and community members. Students in third grade have been enjoying their third science unit, forces and physics. Students have been learning about magnetic, electro-static, frictional, gravitational and elastic force through hands-on activities and experiments. Students in second, third and fourth grade competed in an IXL challenge. As a school, students completed over 100,000 questions. The three winning classes for the IXL Challenge were Ms. Fabrizio's second grade class, Mrs. Heigel's third grade class, and Mrs. Emigholz's fourth grade class. Finally, fourth grade student, Arianna Lee, represented Stokes Elementary School playing in the NYSSMA Piano Festival. The music teachers are so proud of her hard work and dedication to music!

At Island Trees Memorial Middle School, fifth grade students learned about the value of being financially responsible through Hofstra's Money and Me Program. Once a week, each fifth grade class gained insight on how to balance a checkbook, earn interest on their money and avoid financial disaster. The eight week course is sure to leave a lasting impression on all. All English Language Arts teachers participated in classroom spelling bees. Winners from each of those went on to the school-wide spelling bee, run by Mrs. Benjamin and Mrs. Villano. Two champions moved on to the qualifying round. The science enrichment 8A students have officially completed and submitted their mission folders to eCybermission! Since last October, students have been pouring their hearts and minds into scientific exploration, facing challenges head-on and embracing the joy of discovery. Their projects touch on issues close to their hearts- from environmental conservation to community health- showcasing a deep sense of empathy and responsibility for the world around them. The science enrichment 8A teachers, Ms. Rosenking and Ms. Goldstein, are so proud of their students' growth and passion for scientific exploration! The World Language Club participated in the *Pulsera Project*, which is a nonprofit organization that educates, empowers, and connects Central American artisans with students through the sale of colorful hand woven bracelets, or "pulseras" in Spanish. With the money raised from pulsera sales, they fund a wide range of social impact programs that empower people through secondary education, university scholarships, housing programs, healthcare, disability rights advocacy, women and youth leadership, funding for environmental initiatives, and more. The club members helped sell pulseras during their lunch periods and were able to raise \$600.

At Island Trees High School, students were able to participate in a talent show in the month of February. In addition, the Island Trees AP Computer Science class celebrated their third annual hackathon to prepare for the upcoming AP exam. Students spent the day working on their AP computer science projects. Finally, there was an amazing turnout to Battle of the Classes.

The United Teachers of Island Trees thank the community for their continued support. We cannot wait to share the great things that are going on within the schools in the upcoming months.