

The Highland Avenue Newsletter



In the Newsletter:

- How we learn from other schools
- Quick profile of the new 3rd grade collaborative team.
- New Online registration is a success—

Some anonymous quotes from the "smile" Campaign.

You are the greatest person in my life...

Thank-you for sitting with me at lunch....

You are so cool, I love your hair... keep being you....

Thank-you for putting up with me and making me laugh....

You are my best friend and can't imagine my life without you.

You are so smart and amazing...

You are the best teacher ever. Thanks for teaching us everyday,

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Always Learning: making outside ideas work for Highland



I do not want to say Highland School Administration and faculty steal ideas— but we do. Actually, there is an art to taking ideas and making them your own. Seldom do we invent anything at Highland School, rather we find what is working in other schools, or other companies, and we innovate that idea and make it work for us. Companies have been doing the same thing for centuries — always making a better car, a better lightbulb, a better phone. Why not make what we do 'better'? And this is what we take pride in at Highland School.

A perfect example; recently, the Highland school staff learned of an initiative that the Waldwick High School began in which students shared anonymous kind words with each other and then filmed the reaction. What my staff and I saw was heartfelt and inspiring, and we wanted to make this idea our own, but with a Highland spin. Thus, the "Make Someone Smile Today" campaign was started and has now become an integral part of Highland School culture. Students of all grade levels write anonymous notes and place them in a handmade box that has a remote control and lights up (courtesy of Mr. Dolianitis). All anonymous notes are then meticulously distributed to the respective students. Some student reactions are filmed as they read the notes about themselves and assembled into a short clip, ultimately becoming a highlight film of kind sentiments. That film is played in front of the entire student body at a Do the Right Thing Assembly. The kind words resonate, not only because they are nice, but the genuine reactions of those who read the kind words about themselves make it real. The impact kind words have on someone becomes visible and inspiring. So thank-you Waldwick for your idea- it is very much appreciated.

But even then, the Do the Right Thing Initiative itself, which is going on its fourth year and is still very well received by the students, was not an invention of our own. In fact, that idea was inspired and innovated from Toyota's strategic advertising plan from about a decade ago in which the

company came up with a way to embed Toyota's brand into the consumers' heads. From their slogan "Let's Go Places", to their logo of overlapping ellipses and how they advertise, it clearly was successful. Why not apply that same plan to school culture? Our Slogan is "Do the Right Thing", our symbol is the unique gray shirts with the bright lettering, and the students advertise the program themselves by wearing the shirts around the school (just as Toyota cars advertise with their logo while driving around.) I believe the DTRT program has had a positive effect on Highland culture. Thank-you Toyota.

Eventually we will have a maker space in Highland School, this idea was poached too, thank-you Wyckoff, New Milford, Hawthorne and a Private School in Connecticut. A little piece of all their programs will come to fruition in the Highland School in the coming months thanks to the donations of the MPPEF.

This is just a small sampling of ideas that have been adapted to the Highland School. I can assure you every teacher is doing the same thing in their classroom as they make the experience better and better for students. I can only hope other districts are stealing ideas from the Highland School because that means my teachers and I are doing things worthy of imitation.

Mrs. Scala and Mrs. Dolianitis go through the notes daily, which there can be upwards of 100 in a day.



THE HIGHLAND
SCHOOL

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Highlights of
registering
online

Have a new e-mail address? no problem, log in and change your information right away.

On-line signature makes signing forms easy—click away and submit.

Out of over 800 contacts that were mass called on the last snow day Midland Park students at Highland got no errors. All the information is up to date.

Information carries over from year to year, just make sure it is updated and submit.

Siblings in the district are linked so you only have to enter your address and contact information once.

Meet Highland School's new 3rd grade Collaborative Team

"Alone we are smart, together we are brilliant." Steven Anderson

Name: Ms. Carolyn Walsh

Graduated: St. Joes University

Hometown: Upper Saddle River

Favorite Movie: Hunger Games

Favorite Book: *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry

Hobby: Yoga and Running

Someone who inspires Me:

Mr. Walsh, her father



Name: Ms. Kristen DiPaola

Graduated: Montclair State University

Hometown: Wayne

Favorite Movie: *The Breakfast Club*

Favorite Book: *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio

Hobby: Zumba

Someone who inspires Me:

Mrs. Marisco, 4th grade teacher

Paperless Registration:

A move from paper to online re-registration:

For the first time ever, the Midland Park Elementary Schools embarked on a new system for keeping student records as updated as possible. Historically, students would bring home a folder an inch thick of paperwork to be signed and filled out, all of which had to be returned the next day. Despite the astronomical amounts of paper, the countless man-hours put into collecting and entering data, and the inevitability of misplaced forms, this is the way the vast majority of schools operated for the last 2 decades. However, with the reality of more paperwork then ever, and the urgent need for the

most up to date records, the elementary Schools in Midland Park went paperless for the opening day of school.

Now that the online process for year one has been completed and we have worked out the nuances, we are excited and ready to go for year two. In fact, most student forms will be filled out prior to students even setting foot in the schools as information will be given out sometime in August.



To update your child's information anytime visit us online at www.highland.mpsny.org and click the "registration" link under "shortcuts".