

NOTEBOOK

Valentine's projects at L.I. schools

Long Island classrooms were filled with lessons of love this month, as Valentine's Day spurred projects and activities focused on the value and importance of compassion.

In East Meadow, third-grade students at Bowling Green Elementary School created more than 100 animal-shaped cards with poems for kids at Stony Brook University Hospital. The project was inspired by the story of Stony Brook doctors who reconstructed the face of Dunia Sibomana, a boy from the Democratic Republic of Congo who was attacked and disfigured by chimpanzees two years ago.

"I was excited to make these, because the children at Stony Brook are sad and these Valentines will cheer them up," third-grader Heer Mehta said.

In Carle Place, the high school's SPARC/Interact Club put together gift packages for military veterans in the Northport Veterans Affairs Medical Center that included crossword puzzles and magnifying glasses. The effort was inspired by Marine Cpl. John Fretz, a Mineola teacher who met with the club to share his stories of service.

Third-graders at Birch Elementary School in Merrick also showed appreciation for those in the armed forces by creating 70 cards with personalized messages as part of a "Valentine's for Vets" program, sponsored by Town of Hempstead Councilwoman Erin King Sweeney.

"We have family members who have served, and we feel supporting military and veterans is an important part of our community," Birch Elementary third-grade teacher Linda Ronayne said.

SYOSSET

'Super' guest

Syosset High School students were treated to a "super" guest last month: alumnus Ed Newman, a Woodbury native who played in three Super Bowls with the Miami Dolphins — including their championship season in 1973.

Newman presented the school with a commemorative gold-colored NFL football in honor of Super Bowl 50, which now is on display in the athletic wing. He also spoke to the varsity football and wrestling teams about his time on those squads in the 1960s, as well as his post-football career as an attorney and county court judge in Florida.

"The lessons I learned here have brought me to where I am in life," Newman said.

AMITYVILLE

New principal

Brenda Triplett has been named principal of Northwest Elementary



In Freeport, kindergartners at Columbus Avenue Elementary School created 163 cards as part of a "Valentines for Veterans" project.

School, effective Feb. 22. She will replace Vincent Todisco, who left to take a teaching position in Manhattan.

Triplett most recently was assistant principal of Smith Street Elementary School in Uniondale, a post she held since 2008. She also was summer school principal for Uniondale's sixth-grade enrichment program and project director of its Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative.

"It takes vested villagers, not a village, to create scholars," Triplett said. "I intend to work tirelessly to cultivate true partnerships with teachers, parents and the school community."

ISLANDWIDE

Robotics kickoff

More than 40 local robotics teams came together at Stony Brook University for the kickoff of this year's FIRST

Robotics Competition.

This year's theme, "Stronghold," is based on medieval battle-strategy games and challenges teams to raid opponents' defenses and overtake a tower. FIRST, an acronym, stands for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology."

During last month's event, more than 3,000 teams worldwide received competition details and a look at the game field, as well as a sample kit of parts to build their robots, via NASA satellite transmission from FIRST headquarters in New Hampshire.

The Long Island regional competition is scheduled March 31-April 2 at Hofstra University, with some teams advancing to the world-level contest in St. Louis, slated for April 27-30.

— MICHAEL R. EBERT



DEALING WITH BULLIES

In Port Washington, fourth-graders at South Salem Elementary School learned how to uncover clues to solve "Billy's Bully Predicament" during an exercise with Cory Levine, an educator with Submerge Storytelling.

WAY TO GO!

Jolie Nemshin

Student raises funds for Camp Loyaltown

A Cold Spring Harbor student has raised about \$13,000 to benefit Camp Loyaltown in the Catskills, which serves children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Jolie Nemshin, 13, an eighth-grader at Cold Spring Harbor Junior/Senior High School, raised the money over the past two years by coordinating dance parties for fellow students — complete

with a DJ, raffles and food. The most recent event, held last month at Port Washington's H on the Harbor, brought in \$6,400 and drew more than 100 students.

Nemshin said she was inspired to raise money for the summer camp because one of her friend's brothers attends it.

"I see how difficult it can be to care for them sometimes and how nice it is for the families to get a break," she said of people with special needs and their relatives.

This year, she organized a committee of 20 classmates who visited local stores to solicit gift certificates and items for raffles. Committee members also helped hang posters and distribute promotional fliers.

Donations and admission fees brought in more funds. The camp used last year's donation to create a sensory garden so campers can experience various plants' textures, colors and scents, she said.

Nemshin plays drums in her school's band and enjoys playing tennis and lacrosse in her spare time.

— MICHAEL R. EBERT

NOMINATE A STUDENT for Way to Go! Send details and photograph to Michael Ebert, Newsday, 235 Pinelawn Rd., Melville, NY 11747 or email michael.ebert@newsday.com (emailed photos should be high-resolution). Photos cannot be returned and may be used in other publications affiliated with Newsday.