

The Sousa Notes

Home and School Association Newsletter – September 2017

Notes from Dr. Meoli

One of the joys of summer for me is that I get a chance to read a good deal more than when school, with its many events and deadlines, is in session. One of the books I read in August was “What Makes a World-Class School and How Can We Get There,” by James Stronge. Dr. Stronge is a favorite of mine and a student of the principles of effective teaching about which he has written extensively for decades. In the opening chapter, Stronge cites possible examples of what qualities “world class” schools might exhibit and quotes the founder of a well-known and very successful hotel chain who concludes that what separates good organizations from truly great ones is that “they can and do turn mishaps into new service opportunities.” Any hotel, or school, in other words, can operate well when everything is going swimmingly; it is the ability of the organization to perform during times of adversity that defines it as something special.

As I survey the Sousa estate at the dawn of school year 2017-18, I feel very good about what all of us—staff, students, and parents—have done to prepare our school for the year. Our opening has been remarkably busy and, I think, as smooth as any September I remember. We have certainly hit the ground running with Open House, the Welcome Back Picnic, and the Pride in Port Parade already successfully behind us and with our two newly trained RULER teams already turnkey training every adult in the building to continue the robust social and emotional learning environment that has become a hallmark of our school.

It would be hard to forget that, as we were making those preparations to open school, two rather devastating hurricanes disrupted the lives of millions of our friends, relatives, and neighbors in Texas, Florida, and scores of other locales in the southern climes. Two of the people affected were my parents, who live in Naples which was, as you probably know, directly in the path of Irma. A large



number of organizations, from state governments to condominiums to gas stations suddenly faced tremendously adverse conditions. How would they react?

I found myself online trying to find two hotel rooms for my parents and neighbors who had, along with several million other Floridians, fled the state on Wednesday, September 6 as Irma left the Keys, heading north. After several unsuccessful hours, I called an online hotel booking

site and asked for assistance in the Gainesville area. When the agent could find no properties with vacancies, she proceeded to check Lake City (no luck) and then every succeeding town going north on Interstate 75—some of the properties disappeared as she was attempting to book them—finally finding two rooms (forty minutes later) in Byron, Georgia which was over 200 miles away. This agent, and her company, earned my respect and loyalty, as well as my thanks, that night.

I look forward to a wonderful year at Sousa and thank the many people who have worked so hard to ensure that it is a welcoming and inspiring community of learners for all of us. We have, together, done a great deal of good planning and preparing over the summer and are already reaping the benefits of all those efforts. It is my hope, when things may not go as planned this year for any given student, parent, or staff member in the Sousa family, that we will show that same world-class ability to see any problem or issue that may arise as an opportunity to be our best selves.

“We could never learn to be brave and patient if there were only joy in the world.” Helen Keller

Dave Meoli

Sousa Strong Continues...

As we enter our fourth year of the Sousa Strong Initiative, we are all reminded of the importance of being Kind, Confident & Compassionate. Thanks to the design skills of Sousa parents, Stephanie Yardeni and Abby Meyer, we now have a new Sousa Strong logo. Our Sousa Strong banner hangs with pride at our entrance to welcome everyone to Sousa. We are SOUSA STRONG!



More Fun at Sousa

Thank you to all parent volunteers who worked on our recess area, painting two extra 4-square courts along with two hopscotch boards. The Sousa blacktop never looked so fun! In addition, the HSA purchased new playground equipment. The colorful set replaced an obsolete wooden structure and has provided a whole new area of fun for the students. We would like to particularly thank our District Buildings & Facilities team, led by Jim Ristano, who were instrumental in the playground installation, and a huge help with repairing our floor mosaic in front of the school.



Fifth Grade Art Project Takes Shape

Mr. Moore has been diligently working on the Class of 2017 fifth grade art project this summer. The 43 painted aluminum shapes that students completed in June have now been given a clear coat by a local body shop (thank you Johnny O!). A maquette of the final sculpture has been created and site work is being started outside the cafeteria where the piece will be located. This will be the 16th art installation at the Sousa school--one for each year that Dr. Meoli has been principal!



Sousa Welcomes New Parents

September always brings with it the start of school, and of course, the HSA's New Family Breakfast. As is our tradition, all Kindergarten and new parents to the school were invited to attend our welcome breakfast while their children experienced their first day at Sousa. Special thanks to Tracy Chapman and all the volunteers for coordinating the event, and to all new parents and students: Welcome to Sousa!



Welcome Concert

Sousa students were treated to a very special morning concert as they entered the Sousa building the first week of school. With our own Principal, Dr. Meoli on clarinet and our newly appointed band teacher, Mr. Viavattine on Sax, students were transported to a mini jazz concert in their own lobby. What a way to start the day!



Sousa Welcomes



Dr. Kimberly Licato
Assistant Principal

Dr. Licato will split her time between Sousa and Guggenheim this year. Dr. Licato attended the University of Delaware and Queens College and has her doctoral degree from St. John's University. Dr. Licato recently presented information germane to her dissertation at the LIAS-CD conference: The Finnish Way; A Closer Look at one of the Leading Educational Systems of the World. make this initiative possible.



Mary Ellen Casey
School Secretary

Ms. Casey is our new school secretary. She is originally from Oyster Bay, NY, and enjoys spending time at the beach. She will be working with Maureen McCalley in Sousa's main office.



Marisa Johnson
3rd grade Teacher

After teaching at Guggenheim last year, Ms. Johnson is back at Sousa! With a grant from the Ed. Foundation, Ms. Johnson will also be teaching CyberStars for the second year in a row. She is thrilled to be back!



Mark Viavattine
Band Teacher

Mr. Viavattine is originally from Rochester, NY. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in saxophone performance and music education from the Eastman School of Music, and his Master of Music degree in jazz saxophone performance from the University of Miami, Frost School of Music. He loves steak and plays golf.



The Sousa Clipper Float Inaugurates its First Flight on Main Street!

For those who don't know, the Pan Am Clipper fleet was based in Port Washington for a few years. In May 1939, The Yankee Clipper inaugurated the first scheduled trans-Atlantic flight (mail only) and the Dixie Clipper inaugurated the first trans-Atlantic passenger service in June 1939. Both departed from Port Washington, NY. This past Pride in Port Day, the 23-ft long and 18-ft wide Sousa Clipper also made history, inaugurating its first (and last) flight over Main Street to Campus Drive in support of the Port Washington Vikings! Parents and students worked together this summer to turn the Walz Family's original idea into reality. A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped build the float and to all who participated at this year's town parade, making it such a fun day for everyone – Go Sousa! Go Vikings! Go Port!



Sousa Garden Update

Our Sousa Garden Committee Chair, Kate Walz, would like to thank everyone who helped maintain the garden over the summer. Because of them, the garden is bursting with corn, potatoes, root vegetables, squash and a multitude of herbs and flowers. Over the next few weeks, the children will return to the garden to see how the seeds and seedlings they planted last spring have grown throughout the summer. They will harvest any remaining produce, collect seeds for planting next year and apply fresh compost from our bins to the garden beds.



HSA's Welcome Back Picnic

A possible rain forecast didn't stop our Sousa families from coming out in record numbers for the annual Welcome Back Picnic. A Special thank you to Michelle Capobianco and all the volunteers who helped make this family event such a fun night. Here's to a great school year!

Sousa Swag

Our Sousa Apparel Committee, headed by Jessica Feingold and Lindsay Soloff, has been busy with sales at the New Parent Welcome Breakfast, Open House and the Welcome Back Picnic. There is some great new gear for Sousa Spirit days. The next in-person sale will not be until the winter, but apparel can always be purchased through the online store at myschoolanywhere.com



Friendship Bench

Ms. Biblowitz, Ms. Braun and Ms. Lacerenza were busy this summer creating the new Friendship Bench for the Sousa playground! After painting the bench (in our Mood Meter colors) they created a few short videos to show children how to use the bench. The Friendship Bench is a place to sit if you don't have anyone to play with that day. Children seeing you on the bench will come over and ask you to join. There is a tremendous amount of excitement about the new installation!

Committee Kick Off at the First HSA Meeting

There was a terrific turn out for our first HSA Meeting of the year. New & returning parents were welcomed to not only hear a recap of what the HSA has been up to over the summer, but also to hear about what will be happening at Sousa this year. From the new playground installation and painting new 4-square courts on the blacktop, to creating a new Sousa Strong logo & banner and implementing a new "It's All Happening at Sousa" system, the HSA put a lot of work into Sousa over the summer. Dr. Meoli shared an update on Phase 2 of the RULER program on social and emotional learning and also introduced our new Assistant Principal, Dr. Kimberly Licato, who will split her time between Sousa & Guggenheim. Committee Chairs were then given the opportunity to introduce themselves and give a description of what their committees do. Sign up now to join a committee. Do you have any questions or anything to share with your fellow parents? Join us at our next Conversations with Dr. Meoli (Wednesday 9/27 @ 8:15 am) and/or at our next HSA meeting, Wednesday, 10/25 @ 7:30 pm.



Upcoming Events

September

Wednesday, 9/27, Conversations with Dr. Meoli, 8:15 am, MPR

Thursday, 9/28, Dads' Night Out, Port Washington Yacht Club, 8pm

October

Monday, 10/2 - Friday, 10/6, Allergy Awareness Week

Thursday, 10/5, Picture Day

Friday 10/6, Sousa Spirit Day

Monday, 10/9, RECESS

Tuesday, 10/10, Winter Wonderland Fundraiser begins

Thursday, 10/19, Sousa Family Math Night

Wednesday, 10/25, Unity Day

Wednesday 10/25, Conversations with Dr. Meoli, 7pm, MPR

Wednesday, 10/25, HSA meeting with BOE members to discuss Legislative Task Force, 7:30pm, MPR

Monday, 10/30, Winter Coat Drive Begins

Tuesday, 10/31, Halloween Parade, 9:15am, Sousa Blacktop

Teachers Update

Kindergarten is off to a great start! The children really enjoyed their first day of school, learned how to navigate around the school and made new friends. We look forward to a great year!

First graders started off the school year reading First Grade Jitters and making Jitter Juice (it worked like a charm). They spent the first weeks getting to know each other through their "Me" bags and reading the book Chrysanthemum. After reading the book, The Little Engine That Could, the students dropped the "t" in can't and spoke about how they can do anything.

Second graders have been getting back into the swing of what Reading Workshop looks like and sounds like. They've been pushing themselves to build their reading stamina and to read long and strong for at least 20 minutes. Some strategies they have been working on are: retelling, predicting, visualizing, and thinking about characters' feelings and why they might feel that way. In Writing Workshop, they have been immersing themselves in Realistic Fiction books and deepening their understanding of Prompt versus Process writing. In Math, they are practicing skills such as combinations of 10 and their double facts and are now learning all about place value within 1,000.

Third graders are starting off the year learning the scientific method and what it means to be a scientist. They will conduct various experiments over the next few weeks. Place value and numbers up to 10,000 are the focus in their math unit to start the year. Students will work with base ten blocks to gain a better understanding of how numbers are built and recognize patterns. In Social Studies, they started their journey around the world by learning about the continents and oceans. This will lead up to students creating their own paper maché globes!

The fourth grade is off and running. The live crayfish have arrived and the students have begun their investigations for the unit. They are working on a project to help a school in Houston Texas with classroom supplies and words of support. Where in the world is New York State? This is the question every fourth grader is working to answer in Social Studies as they begin their first unit.

Each fifth-grade classroom has spent time getting to know each other, along with getting to know new classroom procedures. Some of the topics they have already started studying are literary genres, place value, and they have even started Dancing Classrooms. Our Dancing Classrooms Teaching Artist is Miss Jessie and she is wonderful. We are looking forward to an exciting year ahead!

Sousa Green Committee End-of-year Recycling & Donation!



In prior years, the Sousa Green Committee has packaged up used text books, workbooks and other school supplies and donated them to various non-profit, charitable and community organizations. We have donated them to 14+ Foundation, an organization that builds new schools in rural Africa, Kids in Need Foundation and Tools 4 School. This past summer, many of the lightly used books were donated to Better World Books, an organization that collects and sells books online to fund literacy initiatives worldwide. The text books and workbooks that were very worn were disposed of responsibly through the Town of North Hempstead's recycling program. The other supplies were donated to various churches, children's programs and preschools in the Port Washington area.

This coming school year, it is the Green Committee's goal to find ways to reduce the amount of leftover materials at the end of the year. We aim to keep more of the supplies IN the school for reuse and/or reduce the overall quantity of materials that are discarded.

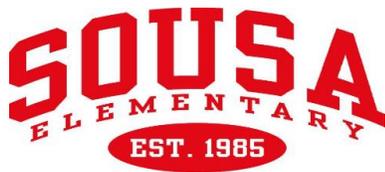
If anyone would like to get involved in this endeavor, contact Green Committee Chairs Sima Vasa (sima.vasa@gmail.com) or Melissa Steeves (steeves.m.melissa@gmail.com).

Sousa's Winter Wonderland Fundraiser is coming!

Get Ready!
Pre-Holiday Shopping Sale:
October 10th – 20th



*Brochures and ordering information will be sent home in backpacks.
For more info, please contact Shana Melendez at
shana.melendez@gmail.com
or Antonietta Manzi at antonietta.m.manzi@gmail.com



The Sousa HSA Invites All Super Dads to the Annual

DADS' NIGHT OUT

SEPTEMBER 28TH

AT THE

PORT WASHINGTON YACHT CLUB



Game starts at 8:30pm

Have fun **AND** support SOUSA. Come watch the game with your friends and win SWAG, all while supporting OUR kids and OUR school. Last year we set records at this event, raising money for our kids that helped fund a number of programs - including Sousa's amazing Science Fair. Let's keep it up and smash the records again this year. Go Sousa!

Credit Cards Accepted

✂ -----

DAD'S NIGHT OUT – THURSDAY 9/28

I would like to help – here is my contact info.

My Name: _____

My email: _____ Please print clearly

YES, I'm in!

I would like to show my Sousa Spirit and

make a donation even though I cannot attend \$_____

(Please make all checks payable to SOUSA HSA, Inc. / Memo: Dads Night Out)

See you there!

Thursday, 9/28
8:00pm

PW Yacht Club
1 Yacht Club Drive
Port Washington, NY

\$25 Admission
includes food,
a lucky drink,
a lucky ticket.

You can win:
Collector's items,
Sports Tickets,
Broadway Tickets,
SWAG, Local
Merchandise

We are
SOUSA STRONG!



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- When you shop on **amazon**smile**** (**smile.amazon.com**), Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to the Sousa HSA

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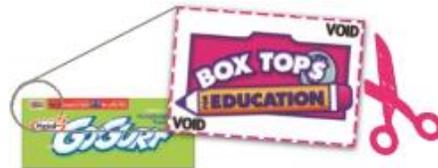
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Our school number is **06751**



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An easy way to earn cash for our school!

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Box tops from participating products

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To school with your child

3 SOUSA GETS CASH!

For every Box Top label collected