

# The Sousa Notes

Home and School Association Newsletter – May 2017

## Notes from Dr. Meoli

Had he survived, John Fitzgerald Kennedy would have been celebrating his 100th birthday on—you can't make this stuff up—Memorial Day. The 35th president of the United States was a figure of almost mythical proportions to many of us whose political consciousness was just taking hold in the early 1960s. (In case you hadn't noticed, his picture has hung in the main office since my early days at Sousa). War hero, civil rights supporter, arts devotee, Peace Corps creator and—perhaps most important to a then young boy—advocate of space exploration, Kennedy captured the imagination of millions with his youth, his vision, and his gift of rhetoric.

JFK's parsimonious inaugural address, short enough to be contained on an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper, contained a number of memorable ideas and phrases that set the agenda for these United States for many years. It created a vision of a strong, civil, compassionate country populated by people who believed in a common good.

As I close my 17th year at Sousa, I am gratified to witness yet again the "torch being passed to a new generation" in terms of staff, parents, and students. Earlier this month we celebrated the tenure of three Sousa teachers Maria Buffolino, Ashley Keen, and Mike Robilotto, as well as a teacher assistant Jane Candido; how fortunate we are that we are hiring when most other districts are cutting back on staff, and that we can attract the best and brightest for our children. As we plan for school year 2017-18, we look forward to the new members on our HSA executive board, including new co-president Jillian Lundberg, our two new Board of Education members Rachel Gilliar and Dave Kerpen, and the scores of other Sousa parents who will volunteer for the many committees and events that make our school so energized and vital. I will have mixed feelings saying "farewell" to our current fifth graders who will be "moving up" shortly, but I look forward to saying "hello" to our incoming kindergarten class.

To paraphrase Kennedy: the energy, the faith, and the devotion which they bring to our endeavor will light our school and all who serve it; "the glow from that fire can truly light the world."

Of course, many thanks are also due to those who have carried the Sousa torch this past year and longer, especially our outgoing co-president Ba-Nhi Sinclair as well as all the scores of parents who have worked so hard on behalf of our school and our children. As we close the year, I anticipate that the hundreds of hours of work by our Science Night Committee, our Literacy Committee, and our Art Room helpers will provide exciting opportunities for the Sousa Family over the last few weeks of school. Thanks to all the moms, dads, and



teachers who plan our special evening celebrations in those, and other, arenas.

Perhaps the most memorable quote from Kennedy's inaugural speech is this: "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." I think the President would be heartened to know how much our parents and staff hold that sentiment dear; I think he would be proud of how well all of you, as adults, model selflessness and service for our students. Thank you, one and all, for keeping the Sousa torch burning brightly from season to season, and from year to year:

"With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth...."

Dave Meoli



## Sousa Wins Dancing Classrooms for the Second Year in a Row

The John Philip Sousa Turquoise Team competed at Schreiber High School against nine other teams for the Colors of the Rainbow Dancing Classrooms Competition. Our twelve fifth grade Sousa reps who competed put in a lot of time and effort to prepare and sharpen their skills, and through their dedication, they came out victorious with gold! Congratulations to Annie P., Luca F., Eliza H., Joseph A., Jack C., Nicholas P., Margaux L., Christina A., Samuel C., Jonathan H., Lara C. and Anna D.

Many thanks to their Teaching Artist, Ms. Jana Oelbaum, who led the residency as well as their coach Mrs. Cangialosi and thanks, also, to HEARTS, the Ed. Foundation and our own Sousa HSA, whose support made the Dancing Classrooms residency possible.



## Calendar of Events

Wednesday 5/24, Conversations with Dr. Meoli, 8:15am, Sousa MPR

Thursday 5/25, Sousa Family STEAM Night, 6:30-9:00pm

Friday 5/26, NO SCHOOL - Superintendent Conference Day

Monday 5/29, NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day

Friday 6/2, Sousa Spirit Day

Friday 6/2, Sousa Beginner Concert, 9:30am, Sousa Auditorium

Tuesday 6/6, Sousa Field Day

Thursday 6/8, Sousa Art Show, 7:00pm

Thursday 6/8, Sousa Family Literacy Night, 6:30pm, Sousa Gym

Friday 6/9, Sousa Kindergarten Celebration, 9:30am, Sousa Auditorium

Sunday 6/11, LI Ducks Game, 1:35pm, Off-site

Wednesday 6/14, Sousa Family Picnic, 6:00pm, Sousa Field

Thursday 6/15, Sousa Family Picnic (rain date), 6:00pm, Sousa Field

Friday 6/16, Sousa Field Day (rain date)

Wednesday 6/21, Sousa 5th Grade Moving Up, 9:15am, Sousa Auditorium

Wednesday 6/21, Sousa 5th Grade Moving Up Party, 6:00pm, Off site

Friday 6/23, Last Day of School

## Fifth Graders Create Robots through Project Lead the Way

Fifth Grade students from Mrs. Szillus' class expanded their understanding of how robots are used in today's world and how they impact our society and environment. The students learned about the engineering design process, robots, inputs, outputs, sensors, touch LED, Bumper Switches, motors, brains, smart cables, and so much more! All activities and projects led to a final problem, which we call the Environmental Design Problem (EDP). The EDP provided an opportunity for the students to apply their robotic skills and knowledge to solve a real-world problem related to an environmental disaster cleanup, such as the one at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant in Japan. The students worked in a group to design, model, and test a robot that could remove hazardous materials (represented by blocks) from a disaster site (student designed and created). This site included a water site and a hazardous material collection zone. The students worked collaboratively and had so much fun being the engineers of the future! This program was entirely funded by the district. Dr. Wafa Westervelt brought "Project Lead the Way" to Port Washington and is looking to expand it each year. Mr. Ryan and Mrs. Szillus were trained by PLTW at Rochester Institute of Technology last summer. The District's PLTW Lead Teachers, will be training additional teachers this summer.



## Sousa Welcomes Hip Hop Fundamentals from Philadelphia to the Sousa Stage

The talented foursome brought energy, excitement, insight and messages of equality and tolerance to all students through two electrifying assemblies. They fired up the audience with hip-hop music and dance moves, getting everyone out of their seats including the staff. They taught the Principles of Hip Hop for K-2 which focuses on young people's involvement in the creation of Hip Hop, it's history, and the diverse community that it came from. For grades 3-5, they demonstrated the challenges of the Civil Rights Movement, using dance to deal with issues of racism, segregation, and the struggle for civil rights. HHF also highlighted the philosophy and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

It was an extremely fun, positive and motivating assembly for the school.



## Rainbow Cooking Lab

Mrs. Pullicino's class used the cooking lab to make rainbow cupcakes and grapes, paint bread and made rainbow floats.

Want to try some of the rainbow recipes? Visit: <http://www.mommatoldmeblog.com/2016/05/rainbow-grapes.html> and <http://kidscraftroom.com/edible-paint-recipe-rainbow-bread/>



## 3-D Printing Game Is Up and Running

In the last edition of the Sousa Notes, fifth graders were busy creating a 3-D printing project in the library. Now after weeks of hard work, their projects are complete. Collaborating in groups, students chose an award-winning book to make an online, interactive guessing game. To guess which award winning book it is, the first of many clues consists of a picture of a 3-D printed object that the students chose to represent the book. The next set of clues is revealed by clicking on the page for each clue. Finally, the book is revealed with a short description of the story. Check out the projects on the Library web page: <http://www.portnet.org/Page/12514>



## CAPS Poster Contest

Congratulations to Anne D. who won the 2017-18 CAPS poster contest as well as Tea C. and Charlotte P. who won honorable mention. Anne's poster will be included in the Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) calendar. Go Sousa!



## A Thank You Note from the HSA Fundraising Committee

Dear Sousa families,

We know this time of year is busy for all, but we wanted to pause amidst the hustle and bustle of our lives to thank all of you who helped make this year's Sousa Social Night such an overwhelming success! This year's event drew over 200 parents and faculty who joined us to celebrate Sousa and the spirit of the community that defines our school.

We also would like to extend our appreciation to all of the parents who could not attend the event but participated in the faculty auction or sent in donations.

Through your generosity, we raised approximately \$27,000 for the Home and School Association (HSA) which will provide funding for a number of diverse and meaningful programs for our children throughout the year. Those programs include literacy and cultural arts performances, special classroom projects and supplies, further enhancement of our RULER program, and the fifth grade experience that comprises the yearbook, graduation party and grade-wide art project that becomes a permanent fixture at Sousa.

We would like to extend a very special "thank you" to all who participated in making Sousa Social Night a success:

- The Sousa HSA Fundraising Committee and all those who lent a hand at the event. - The class liaisons and level leaders who helped publicize our event to Sousa families. - Our teacher representatives Karen Silver and Liz Molloy who organized the faculty donations. - Our faculty for donating their time and providing priceless opportunities for our children to enjoy fun experiences with them. - Our local businesses and corporate sponsors for their contributions. (A full list of donors can be found on the Sousa HSA website. Please be sure to support these businesses and thank them for their generosity toward our school.) - Our many Sousa parents who made generous contributions to support the event. A special thank you to the Andrezzi family, Byers family, Capobianco family, Fazzari family, Fensterstock/Romero family, Gargani family, Gould family, Itzikowitz family, Kerrane family, Longaro family, Lorson family, Manzi family, Mastronardi family, Meyer family, Andrea Moleski, Packer family, Rowe family, Saltzman-Kahn family, Schachter family, Schindler family, Sedgwick family, Schiffer family, Stephens/Rabman family, Stolper family, Stulbaum family, Tiger family, Tyras family, Wang/Cotton family, Waters family and Yardeni family.

Finally, we would like to thank all of our Sousa families for your tireless support, for joining us at the Sousa Social, and for taking part in all our fundraising endeavors. Your involvement is so important, necessary and appreciated. The energy at the Manhasset Bay Yacht club on Saturday evening was buzzing with love for the children and the school. We cannot wait until next year!

Jen Schiffer & Shana Melendez  
Sousa HSA Fundraising Co-Chairs



## Earth Day Creative Posters

The Sousa Green Committee would like to thank all the young artists who sent their many wonderful and creative posters in celebration of Earth Day. It made the school very proud to see how much these students care about the planet and living sustainably. These creations are on display in the cafeteria for all to admire. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle!



## Town of North Hempstead T-Shirt Competition

Sousa Student Margaux L. received a Certificate of Honor for her submission to the Town of North Hempstead "Clean Water Starts With You" T-Shirt Competition. She was proud of representing not only herself but Sousa and all the other Elementary Schools of the Port Washington School District with her design, which was selected as one of the most creative.



## Honoring Sousa Faculty

Many Sousa faculty attended May's BOE Budget Hearing and Tenure Meeting in support of four Sousa staff members who received tenure. Ms. Buffolino encapsulates the feeling of the faculty and the evening by saying "Thank you again to everyone! It was an unreal experience and I'm so grateful to be a part of this wonderful community and do what I love to do each day." Congratulations to Maria Buffolino, Ashley Keen, Michael Robilotto and TA Jane Candido on this wonderful accomplishment! Sousa is fortunate to have you.



## Sousa Students Shine at PortFest

The Rain didn't stop our town from participating in The Hearts Foundation's annual PortFest! Families flocked to the two Schreiber gymnasiums where they were treated to Lincoln Center quality performances from many of the Port Washington schools. Our own Sousa Orchestra impressed with String Explosion by Frank Rodgers and the Sousa Jazz Band performed Tito Puente's classic Oye Como Va. While all the performances were going on in one gym - the adjacent gym housed all of the fun craft & information stations. Sousa did not fail to keep the crowds busy. Our new craft this year, mosaic making, proved to be a huge success. Children were able to let their creative juices flow choosing from a large variety of tiles to decorate their choice of shape. There were stars and moons, a variety of animals, special words, frames, coasters & mirrors. PortFest is the largest fundraiser event for HEARTS with proceeds going towards funding grants for new student art programs and initiatives for the upcoming school year.



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## Mother's & Father's Day Fair

Many thanks to co-chairs Christina Byers, Jayshree Pancholi and Abby Meyer as well as to all of the volunteers, for helping out at this year's Mother's & Father's Day Fair. Their dedication and creativity made it a successful event. The children loved coming to the fair to buy trinkets for their loved ones. We hope everyone liked their gifts!



## The Vocabulary Parade

This year's Vocabulary Parade was HOT, as in sweltering, sizzling, blazing, broiling, BUT ALSO as in cool, praiseworthy, awesome, stylin' and rad.

Sousa students, faculty, and even some parents dressed up as a plethora of creative words, each meaningful and clever in their own way. Together, we learned some new words and had a chance to celebrate each other's creativity.

The parade was a culmination of a two-week long vocabulary initiative where students sent words in from home to post on various interactive vocabulary graffiti walls throughout the building. The HSA Literacy Committee would like to thank the entire Sousa community: students, faculty and families for making this another great year of vocabulary fun!



## Budget Vote and Board of Education Members' Election

The School Budget 2017-2018 passed! Thank you to all who voted, and congratulations to the District's new Board of Education Members Rachel Gilliar and Dave Kerpen, both Sousa parents. Their term will start July 1st.



## Sousa's Spring Concert

Spring is in the air! Sousa's Spring Concert opened with Mrs. Burke's orchestra playing three songs, one of which was Sahara Crossing. She then conducted the String Ensemble that played El Toro. Mr. Chiarello first led the Band in performing three songs, one of which was Hedwig's Theme from Harry Potter and then finished with the Jazz Band's rendition of the James Bond Theme. With fourth and fifth grade chorus interspersed between orchestra and band, singing favorites such as Be Our Guest and Here Comes the Sun, Ms. Berberabe concluded the night with the fourth and fifth year chorus finale of Sousa School Song! A job well done by our performers and conductors!



## Teachers' Update



May was an exciting month in Kindergarten. The students went on a trip to Green Meadows Farm. They also visited the Sousa garden. All the classes observed and learned about the life cycle of the ladybug.

First graders read and wrote all different types of poems. By the end of the poetry unit, they will have a published book full of cinquain, haiku, acrostic, listing, and shape poetry. The best part about this unit is sharing their creative side with our readers!

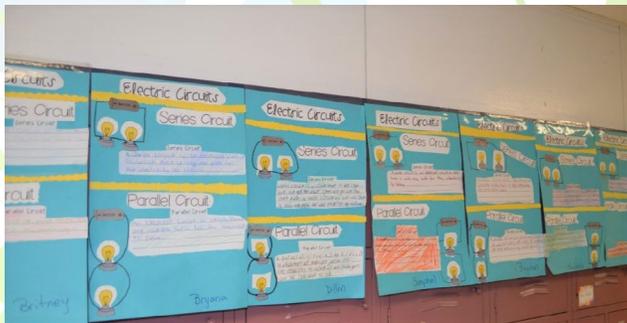


Second graders have been travelling back in time to compare what life was like then to the present. They visited Old Bethpage Village Restoration to get a first-hand look at what life was really like back then! Students were collaboratively working on writing their non-fiction books about penguins. In math, students took a closer look at the clock to tell time and write it digitally and in words.

The third graders have been traveling through China. Students were exploring the varied geography, the ancient history, and the similarities and differences of life today. They had the perfect opportunity to walk to Soundview and watch Born in China to see the native wildlife and terrain of China.



The fourth grade had a presentation on the Birds of Prey on Long Island that was sponsored by Residents for a Beautiful Port Washington. Students also had a representative from PSEG talk about electrical safety, since this is a unit of study in our grade that we just finished up.

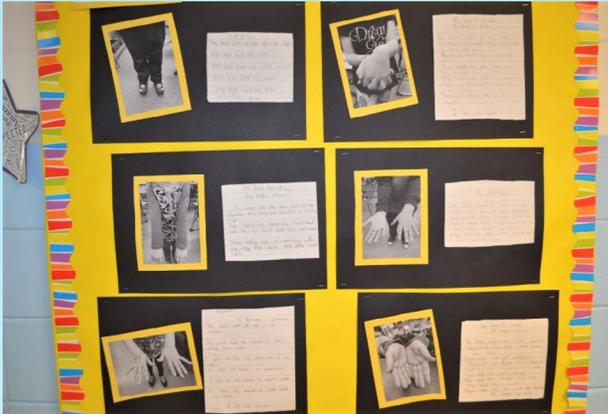


## Teachers' Update

Fifth grade is excited about all the end of the year events planned. Students went to the Nassau County Museum of Art, Smithtown Historical Society for the Civil War Encampment and are looking forward to their Weber Middle School Orientation and their Day in The City Trip! In order to get the students used to their Weber days and become more independent, we will begin using the lockers and allowing the students to walk to and from their Specials on their own.



Library - April was National Poetry Month and the Sousa library was bursting with poems! We had adult poetry readers in the morning to help us start our day and decorated our poem pockets in preparation for "Poem in a Pocket" day which was held at the end of last month.



In Physical Education students just finished our volleyball skills unit. They were able to learn how to forearm pass, set, and serve. ACES just wrapped up and kids are getting ready for Field Day.



## Staff Luncheon

The Sousa teachers and staff were whisked away from land and taken "Under the Sea" for our annual Staff Appreciation Luncheon on May 17th. The lounge was transformed into an underwater world with shells, cool blues and fish decor handmade by some of the students. As always, our families were very generous in providing both monetary and food donations to make this day so special for our deserving staff. A special thank you to our Chairs Liz Hockman Mak, Monica Ahmuty and Maria McCarvill for all of their hard work in coordinating this event. Another thank you goes to Hope Pecullan for her adorable seashell/seahorse handmade cookie favors.



## After-School Art

Thanks to a grant from HEARTS, 3rd -5th grade students from throughout the District are enjoying an after-school class of student driven creative exploration. By working with ceramics, painting, printmaking and mixed media, they are creating individual visual statements that grow out of their experiences, feelings and interests. During this ten week program, the students are also learning how other great artists have created personal work.

(HEARTS is a non-profit organization devoted to promoting and enriching the arts in Port Washington and its public schools.)



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**hearts**

## Our Region Program

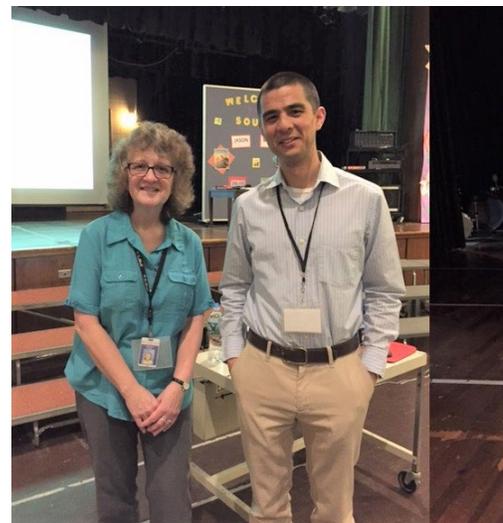
Mrs. Lucie's 4th grade class is enjoying learning about the importance of education for careers in business and the responsibility to contribute to the local community through the Junior Achievement program sponsored by National Grid, a local energy company. Sousa parent Ken Daly has been visiting the class to teach the "Our Region" program, and the students are learning about business, economics, entrepreneurship, natural resources, and the environment. The class is appreciating the program and will be well prepared for future success in fifth grade and beyond!



## Author/Illustrator Jason Chin Visits Sousa

Jason Chin gave students an inside look at how he writes and illustrates his nonfiction books, the newest one being "Grand Canyon". He researches a subject and then embarks on a research trip where he draws many thumbnail sketches of the area he is exploring. Once he's home, he then uses his imagination to elaborate on those thumbnail sketches to create a story enhanced by pictures.

To include the audience, Mr. Chin wrapped up his assembly by picking a student to be his model and then asking students in the audience where the model should be placed and what should be drawn around her. They ended up with a picture of a kindergartner in the Atlantic Ocean surrounded by a walrus, shark and sea turtle!



## Garden Update

Gardening at Sousa is well underway! In the main garden, the third graders created bamboo pole structures for sugar snap peas, which the kids also planted, to climb. The second graders planted rows of potatoes, strawberries and vegetable seeds (kale, beets, radish, carrots, spinach and lettuce). Thank you to Sousa mom, Jaime Platt, for donating the vegetable seeds and to Patti Wood who donated kale and chard seedlings! Along the school building, near the main entrance, the kindergarten classes planted sun-loving marigolds to brighten the garden and the first graders planted flowers and herbs that attract butterflies and their larvae.

In a few weeks, the fourth graders will learn about and plant the Native American tradition of the "Three Sisters" (corn, beans and squash), and the fifth graders will help the garden by planting flowers to attract beneficial insects and pollinators.

The Garden Committee is looking for volunteers to help maintain the garden during the summer months. If you are interested in helping weed, water and harvest the garden, please contact Kate Walz at [kmwalz@hotmail.com](mailto:kmwalz@hotmail.com). No gardening experience necessary!



## Port Washington Named One of the Best Communities for Music Education

The NAMM Foundation recognized school districts nationwide that show commitment to students pursuing music and the arts.

The Port Washington Union Free School District was recognized by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation as one of the best communities for music education in 2017.

Port Washington is among 527 school districts across the United States that was recognized for offering a well-rounded education that gives students the opportunity to learn and practice music and the arts and for demonstrating an exceptionally high commitment and access to music education.



## Sample Day

Thank you to the HSA Nutrition Committee co-chairs Mary Apat and Kathy Shanahan who held another sample day during the lunch periods this month. On Wednesday, May 17th, the children tasted Roasted Zucchini Sticks. Last month's Roasted Cauliflower was a hit, and we had many children asking for seconds and thirds with the zucchini as well! Both Roasted Cauliflower and Roasted Zucchini are featured on this month's lunch menu. Please encourage your children to try them!

## Technology - Parents' Guide to Kids and Cell Phones

For many parents who have a fifth grader going to Middle School next September, you are probably thinking about getting him/her a cell phone as a graduation gift. Before you hand over this powerful tool that connects them to the world in an exciting new way, we encourage you to take the time to explore the following cell phone tips this summer to ensure the children use their new device safely, responsibly and respectfully:

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/cell-phone-parenting>



## Stepping Back in Time

To enrich their classroom studies on "Communities", the second grade visited Old Bethpage Restoration which is a living history museum that allows guests to step back in time and experience life as it was on Long Island in the 19th century. The children visited various buildings dating from 1765 through 1865 that were used as a school house, a general store, a farm and differing professions. Children experienced how different life was in the 1800's to life as we know it today!



## Mrs. Potucek's Road to Revolution

After the children completed their social studies unit on the Road to Revolution, the parents in Mrs. Potucek's fourth grade class were treated to a re-enactment of the many events that led us to the American Revolution. From events such as the Stamp Act to the formation of the Minutemen and, of course, the famed Paul Revere lantern call that the British were coming, the students put their all into this presentation. They honed their research skills to familiarize themselves with each of the events that proceeded to the revolution, made artifacts to tie in with their assigned event and dressed the part as they presented mini skits depicting the various events. The morning culminated in a "museum" like tour of their research projects and artifacts that even included homemade Johnny Cakes, a favorite of the time.



**Do you have any photos from Sousa class trips or activities?  
Show off your child's artwork, accomplishments, prizes won, etc.  
in The Sousa Notes. Please send any photos, articles to your  
class liaisons or directly to:  
Rod at [rodn29@gmail.com](mailto:rodn29@gmail.com)  
Pam at [pamollendorff@yahoo.com](mailto:pamollendorff@yahoo.com)  
or Mat at [lanfant@msn.com](mailto:lanfant@msn.com)**