

the **Souza**

Notes

June 2021

**END OF
YEAR
ISSUE!**

the Sousa

Notes

June 2021

A Note from
Mrs. Sheehan



As I sit in the warmth of the impending summer sun writing to you today, I am overcome with a feeling of pride. Pride in our students and their ability to rise, learn, grow and succeed during a time of educational transformation. Pride in our staff for not hesitating when asked to completely redesign the way they educate, encourage and care for our students and families on a moment's notice. Pride in our community of parents and caregivers for their commitment, trust and partnership. Pride in the knowledge that I will have the honor of leading this amazing community in the years to come.

While the year has not always been easy, the silver linings are boundless. Our incredible mental health team had the foresight almost six years ago to incorporate RULER into our tapestry which has supported, grounded and guided us in regulating our feelings with every twist and turn. We have leaned on each other for strength when we needed it most and in turn have become stronger than we ever were before.

Over the last few weeks, we have celebrated the accomplishments of our students at every grade level. We have danced together during ACES, demonstrated our endurance during Field Day, showed our spirit at our last Sousa Spirit Day of 2021, celebrated our youngest students at the Kindergarten Picnic, and held our 5th grade Valedictory Program. While this year has not been typical, it has been memorable.

Early on in March just after schools closed and before we really knew the impact COVID may have on our lives, I was at dinner with my grandmother and she was (once again) sharing stories of the Depression with us. Stories that have transformed who she has become as a result of the challenges her family faced. When she finished,

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A Note from Mrs. Sheehan



she encouraged us to take in all that was happening in the world around us because it would become our story. A story meant to be shared with our children and grandchildren for years to come.

This year has become our story to share with generations to come and while it is not what any of us ever expected, it has transformed

us into who we are and who our children will become.

My only hope is that our children become the change necessary to transform darkness into light and that their light continues to be a beacon of hope for all of humanity in the years to come.

**Until next year,
-Mrs. Sheehan**

A Note from Gabrielle Sternberg

Well, what can I say about 2020-21? We came, we saw, we conquered!

I have had the privilege of being your Senior HSA Co-President this school year. As challenging as this year has been, I can honestly say that not only did we survive but we thrived. I have been fortunate enough to have worked closely with our amazing administration, teachers, staff, and parent volunteers. I can't thank you all enough for taking the time out of your busy schedules to assist with the "pandemic-related" and ever-changing plans and needs for our school. We certainly learned a lot this year: patience, resiliency, adaptability, and of course a sense of humor just to name a few.

While this school year brought along some challenges, we learned to pivot and, as a result, had some amazing events and made some everlasting memories. Virtual bingo & Cooking Lab classes, trivia night, Read-A-Thon, our virtual Sousa Social, "Free Mask Fridays," staff appreciation events, online book fair, Literacy Week, Field Day, Kindergarten picnic, 5th grade celebrations and graduation...it all may have



looked a little different from past years, but nonetheless, we as a community made it happen.

A few shout-outs...Mrs. Sheehan: we couldn't have asked for a better captain this year. Your medical background and your "cool, calm, and collected" demeanor made us all feel safe and kept our kids happy and learning...mostly in-person. To my Junior Co-President, and soon to be Senior Co-President Jessica Weaver: you, my friend, are a rock-star. I'm happily stepping down because I know Sousa is in good hands with you next year (especially with Erin Mastronardi as your Junior Co-Pres)! To our hard-working HSA Executive Board: Thank You! Without people like you, none of this would be possible. And to all of our parents: you should be very proud to be a part of this Sousa family. Thank you for stepping up and doing your part to make this school year a success - you are the reason why we are #SousaStrong!

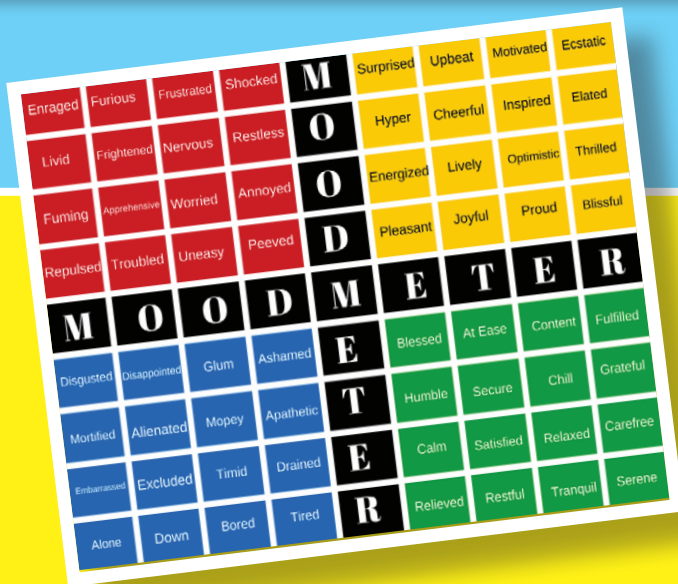
Enjoy your summer and I look forward to an amazing 2021-22 school year and getting to meet many of you next year in-person...and not on a computer screen!!

SouSa
HSA

In Case You Missed It!

Check out the
link to Sousa's
first ever virtual
talent show!

<https://flipgrid.com/+sgt2021>



Couldn't attend
the RULER 102
program?
Watch it here!

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AuaH90wqZRoaiUr5RTMZkU72IYVd?e=hcBu70>



STAFF APPRECIATION!

Is the way to our educators' hearts through their stomachs? Hopefully Sousa staff and teachers had full stomachs and full hearts this spring as the HSA organized a couple of days featuring scrumptious food to show them how much they are loved and appreciated.

First Port Washington's own HG Que catered a lunch featuring their award-winning BBQ. A few weeks later, local favorite Smusht set up on campus with their coveted homemade ice cream sandwiches. Coffee and a \$5 gift

card to Dunkin Donuts for all faculty and staff generously donated by a Sousa parent topped off the event. As the giant lawn sign proclaimed during staff appreciation week: **THANK YOU SOUSA TEACHERS AND STAFF!!**

In this pandemic year of change and uncertainty, your Herculean efforts to keep our children engaged, happy and safe in their education is appreciated beyond all words.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and most of all, relaxing summer!



Get to
Know...

Mrs. Reese!

With this edition we're introducing a new feature, Get To Know, in which kids from various grades get to interview teachers and staff about their lives.

This month our intrepid reporter, Zach Arlow, from Mrs. Baxter's 5th grade class, asks questions of our one and only Mrs. Reese!

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Cooperstown, NY.

Q: How long have you worked at Sousa?

A: I've been here for 34 years. I started two years after Sousa's founding!

Q: What is your favorite thing about working at Sousa?

A: My favorite part of working here is working with all the children and I also love working with the teachers and staff.

Q: What do you like to do outside of Sousa?

A: I have volunteered with the PW fire department for many years, so my favorite thing to do when I'm not here at school is to be at the firehouse!

Q: What is your favorite food?

A: I like seafood a lot.





Congratulations, Fifth Graders!

The end of the year was filled with festivities and fun for our 5th graders to commemorate their moving up to middle school!

Thanks to the efforts of the HSA 5th Grade Committee and the 5th grade teachers, the students were treated to a picnic, with a DJ, pizza and the Kona ice truck.

Of course the traditional Broadway trip was not in the cards this year, but the students did have a fun movie afternoon watching Shrek the Musical, complete with an intermission featuring popcorn and candy. The teachers decorated the hallways, and each student also received a beach towel personalized with the

signatures of the entire grade.

The celebrations culminated in an in-person, outdoor moving-up ceremony which parents, to their delight, were able to attend.

The Sousa 2021 5th Grade class has demonstrated amazing leadership, altruism and grit during this pandemic year. We will think of them every time we pass their art project - beautiful ceramic flowers personalized to represent something about themselves, which will be added to the fence surrounding the Sousa Garden.

Congratulations to this year's class, and we wish them the best of luck as they enter Weber next year!



Virtual Egypt!



Mrs. Silverstein and Mrs. Tamburino's Sousa Reading Team traveled back in time to Ancient Egypt, through an interactive, dynamic, virtual experience led by museum educator and expert Marisa Horowitz-Jaffe.

Students experienced what life was like when pyramids dotted the horizon and papyrus grew along the Nile as they explored all of Ancient Egypt.

The program culminated with students presenting their knowledge in a mini-movie production.

It was an amazing adventure for all, sponsored by the Sousa HSA





Submerge Storytelling!

Jump into a Story! That's exactly what our students experienced this past week!

It started on June 10th when our students were treated to a virtual storytelling experience by Long Island writer/storyteller Cory Levine, of Submerge Storytelling.

Then a few days later the Fourth Graders were treated to a week-long fully virtual story realm created by Cory. In the past Cory would set up a classroom at Sousa to mimic the room of the main character in his story and the kids would have to use deductive reasoning and critical thinking skills to solve problems and understand the character better.

This year Cory came up with a fully virtual experience. The children were able to access the realm through their Chromebooks and look through over 30 photos of the "room" and still get clues everyday to help them with their solving skills. Cory Zoomed every day with them for daily check-ins.

The kids had a blast. Many thanks to the HSA for sponsoring this amazing program!

SouSa Gives Back!



The generosity of our school and town community was phenomenal this spring, as evidenced by the overwhelming support for HSA fundraising efforts.

The season started off with a fun virtual donut-making class hosted by local business, The Cooking Lab (founded by alumni Sousa parents!), that raised \$600!

In May, for the second year, the Sousa Social, the HSA's largest fundraising event of the year, was held completely online. This event, featuring a variety of high quality silent auction, raffle and "mystery bag" prizes donated by (mostly local) businesses and faculty, raised an amazing \$25,000.

Many thanks to those who participated in the event, donated items, and of course to the Sousa Social Committee and Fundraising Committee for their hard work in making events like this possible!



Sousa
Safe!

Pillowcase Project

Sousa students in grades 3-5 participated in the American Red Cross Pillowcase Project.

The purpose of this project is to teach children how to help keep their families and



communities safe in case of emergencies.

Students decorated a pillowcase and brought home a list of essential items to put in their pillowcase to prepare for emergencies.

Click [here](#) for a link to the parent handbook/activity guide for further discussions with your child.

ACES!



ACES, which stands for “All Children Exercise Simultaneously,” was back live this year!

Each grade was able to strut their stuff to old favorites such as Cotton Eyed Joe, the Cha Cha Slide, Hey Baby and The Continental Drift, as well as this year’s new addition, Blinded by the Lights.

Many thanks to our physical education teachers, Mr. Dooley and Mr. Robilotto, for keeping the kids moving in such a fun way and making sure the ACES tradition continues!



Yay
K!



**Hooray for our youngest
Sousa Strong students!**

**Our kindergarteners
celebrated a successful
year with an ice cream
picnic.**

**First grade, here
they come!**



Field Day!



Students were thrilled that Field Day was back this year! Spreading over two days to ensure social distancing, each class in a grade was assigned a different color to compete in a variety of fun relay race type games.

Students proudly displayed their team colors as they competed in good fun and capped the day off with ices donated by the HSA.

Another big shout-out to Mr. Dooley and Mr. Robilotto for adapting Field Day to Covid restrictions without sacrificing any of the fun of this popular event.



Mindfulness Grant!



Mindful Kids NY returned to Sousa, virtually this year, to teach the art of mindfulness to students in every grade!

Mindfulness, which teaches students to be present in the moment, has been linked to benefits in children such as lower stress and anxiety, emotional regulation, and increased resiliency, attention and empathy. In these trying times of Covid, this program was a welcome complement to our RULER program.

Thank you to the Ed Foundation for funding this important and enjoyable program!



SouSa
Strong!

KID POWER GROUP!

Pink is for girls and blue is for boys, right? Wrong, says a group of 4th grade students who have come to be known as the Kid Power Group.

These students successfully advocated against the bathrooms at Sousa embodying these stereotypical male and female colors.

First, they put together a proposal to Mrs. Sheehan. Then with the guidance of Mrs. Sheehan and Mrs. Biblowitz, they presented a Powerpoint to the Compact Committee (the committee of parents, faculty, staff and administrators that have the ability to set non-curricular policies and procedures).

Upon persuading the committee and receiving word that their proposal to repaint the bathrooms was approved, the Kid Power Group next collaborated with administrators on a school-wide survey to pick the new bathroom colors.

**And the winner is ...
a very school-spirited, gender-neutral,
red-and-white striped color
scheme for all!**

Holocaust Museum



These powerful programs were originally suggested by the 5th grade teachers in order to supplement the grade's historical fiction unit.

In the wave of anti-semitic incidents that hit all too close to home this spring with the defacement of Sousa property, these programs are all the more timely and important.

Thank you to our teachers for incorporating programs like this into the curriculum, and to the HSA for funding them.

Last week, the 5th graders experienced two virtual programs presented by the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County.

They engaged in a one-hour virtual tour of the museum. Led by a museum facilitator, the students learned the history of the Holocaust through exploration of primary source documents, artifacts and the museum's six galleries.

In addition, students heard testimony from a Second Generation Survivor. A "2G" Survivor is the child of a Holocaust survivor. When parents are no longer able to share their story, their children may continue to share their experience.



We'll Miss You!



Kindergarten teacher Jill Lowe and Fourth grade teacher Mary Lou Wright, along with paraprofessional Mary O'Brien, will be retiring at the end of the school year.

With 28, 30 and 24 years in the district, respectively, these educators have left an indelible print on the hearts of so many Sousa families over the years.

Mrs. Lowe's good natured sense of humor and ease with the kids created a relaxed and warm environment for our littlest learners to explore and thrive academically. Mrs. Lowe loves her kids! She is always ready with a smile and a word of encouragement for all. Whether it was voting on the name of the class pet goldfish or learning the days of the week in Spanish- her classroom culture was always engaging and fun!

Mrs. Wright, with her warm smile and patient, welcoming personality, manages to

both nurture and challenge her students. At an age where more is expected of her students academically and they are starting to evolve socially as well, Mrs. Wright truly gets her students and brings out the best in them. Her dedication to her students was unwavering this year, as always -- even when she was out on leave she made sure to check in and collaborate frequently with her substitute to ensure that everyone was on track and to guarantee a smooth transition.

Not only has Mrs. O'Brien been a fixture in our Sousa community as a paraprofessional, helping in a myriad ways as our phenomenal paras do, but she also attended Sousa as a student!

We wish Mrs. Lowe, Mrs. Wright and Mrs. O'Brien all the best in their retirements. They will be sorely missed!



**HAVE A
FUN AND
SAFE
SUMMER!**