

the **Souza**

Notes

October 2021

BACK



TO SCHOOL!

the **Sousa**

Notes

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A Note from
Mrs. Sheehan



The new academic year has brought energy, excitement and hope to each day. This summer our staff worked diligently to ensure that our facilities and our protocols would allow our students and families to return to a more “normal” year while still keeping our community as healthy and safe as possible. We have been able to do this by opening our doors to visitors, scheduling field trips, allowing the use of lockers, resuming full band and orchestra rehearsals and continuing to find creative ways to allow our favorite events to return this year. We can’t wait to see you at our Halloween Parade on October 29th (weather permitting)!

Last year and this year, we are spending more time than ever before outdoors. So, our committees have started to examine ways we can revitalize our outdoor spaces. Some projects that are already underway include replacing wood in our garden, a new friendship bench (designed and created for us by Girl Scouts!), installing 5th grade projects at our school entry and so much more to come! A huge thank you to our HSA, custodians and buildings and grounds crew for their support in making these projects a possibility!

We have welcomed many new faces to our staff this year. While I know they will be introduced in another portion of this edition of Sousa Notes, I would like to give each of them a warm Sousa welcome. These new staff members are highly qualified and have demonstrated the qualities we value here at Sousa each day- they are kind, confident and compassionate. In addition to new staff at Sousa, we have a considerable number of new families who have joined us. Welcome to the Sousa family! We are looking forward to getting to know you at our upcoming community events.

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A Note From
Mrs. Sheehan



We are so grateful to be able to meet the academic needs of our district elementary students through the expansion of the

Integrated Co- Teaching (ICT) program. Currently, we offer an ICT class in grades 2,3 and 4 at Sousa. This program offers students with disabilities the opportunity to be fully included with their peers rather than being segregated or pulled out of their classes for services. In just a few short weeks, our students are learning, growing and demonstrating their individual success both in and outside of the classroom.

Since March of 2020, the word “why” has been at the forefront of just about every conversation I have engaged in both professionally and personally. So much so that this year, the Sousa staff has committed ourselves to the process of “Remembering our Why.” On convocation day, “Remember your Why” became the foundation for being deeply reflective of why we were called to education, why we commit ourselves each day to positively influencing our academic community and why we need to work closer than ever before in the coming months and years to ensure that we are



meeting the diverse needs of our students and families.

Our staff is not the only community members who ask “why” daily. Throughout the day, it is common to hear our families and students pose the question “why” multiple (dare I say, hundreds of) times a day. Three simple letters which together formulate a word that opens the door to knowledge, thoughts, ideas, reflection and in many instances more questions. A word that is the reason or purpose for

what we do and the decisions we make. A word that is able to reflect emotion by expressing surprise or to emphasize a response. A word that is intended to provide a reason or explanation. Many times, the answer or solution to “why” is clear and comes with ease. Other times, the answer or solution to “why” can be confusing and

may even require deep reflection before an answer is able to be formulated.

In the coming months, I will encourage you to ask yourselves “why” along with us as we continue our partnership to be in alignment with the Mission and Vision of the Port Washington School district which “believes in the potential of every learner.”

Until Next Time,
-Mrs. Sheehan

A Note from Our HSA Senior Co-President, Jessica Weaver

Now THIS school year is more like it! What a pleasure to be able to return to Sousa this year under more normal circumstances.

The HSA has been able to hold our Welcome Breakfast, (an epic) Welcome Back Picnic, Dad's Night Out, Mom's Night Out, and various and sundry smaller committee-related meetings and events. The garden is open to a few parent volunteers at a time and holding HSA meetings virtually means that more parents than ever can participate.

Speaking of participation, welcome to our new families! Whether you are new to this area or were raised in Port and have returned to raise your family, volunteering is a terrific way to meet the other parents in your school community. Last year, volunteering during the pandemic gave me valuable insight into how caring and positive our community is. Spending time with like-minded parents gave me hope that everything would ultimately be fine. Somehow, during a time of limited social interaction, I managed to make new friends while volunteering for the HSA. It's even easier now, and I promise it's worth your time!



With over 30 committees, the HSA has an opportunity for every parent -- whether in the paid workforce or a stay-at-home parent. It takes many hands to make our fundraisers and community-building events work, so send us an email at sousahsa@gmail.com and let us know what you're interested in helping with.

One final word about last year that cannot go unsaid: thank you Gabrielle for being the pandemic

HSA president who made things happen! Thank you for making things run smoothly even when the guidelines kept changing and thank you for being my most calm, composed friend during that crazy year. Another big, heartfelt thank you to the rest of this year's HSA Executive Board: Erin, Candace, Joanna, Pui, Jessica Malloy, Karyn, Amanda, Denise, Shannon, and Rachael. You've already been so busy and I'm grateful for your time, collaboration, and leadership. We have strong synergy, as the Sousa Strong HSA Board should.

**Looking forward to a terrific school year,
Jessica Weaver
HSA Senior
Co-President**

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Welcome Kindergarteners!

Our youngest students were able to get a sneak peek of Sousa before their official first day of school. Hopefully touring Sousa, meeting with some staff and leaving with a goody bag helped to ease some of those first-day jitters.





NEW PARENT BREAKFAST

While the students settled into their classrooms on the first day of school, parents of kindergarteners and other families new to Sousa had an opportunity to ease their own first-day nerves at the annual New Parent Welcome Breakfast. The weather cooperated for an outdoor breakfast at the Port Washington Yacht Club. Families had a chance to mingle and meet the HSA Board in a beautiful setting. Many thanks to Tracy Chapman and her committee for coordinating such a warm welcome to new families.



pride in port parade

The Pride in Port Parade was back and better than ever this year! Sousa students, parents and our new assistant principal Mr. DiCarlo marched behind the always impressive Sousa float. This year's float was the brainchild of the Alvarez family, who took on the Herculean job of coordinating its design and construction in their backyard, with the help of the Sousa students and parents who came ready to hammer, paint, paper mache and more.



Welcome Back Picnic



Dozens of pizzas! Mel's ice cream (of course)! Music! Contests! This year's welcome back picnic wasn't just a welcome back after summer break, but as the first all-school HSA event on campus since winter 2020, it marked a welcome back to a kind of normalcy that we were sorely missing last school year. The weather was perfect and spirits were high among the huge crowd of parents and students alike.

Conversations with Mrs. Sheehan & HSA Meeting

Conversations with Mrs. Sheehan is a great, informal setting in which to hear our principal update parents on what has been going on in school and to get any of their questions, big or small, answered. Always informative, our first Conversations at the end of September was no exception. Mrs. Sheehan was thrilled to report on a smooth start to the school year with a return to a much more normal learning environment. Directly following Conversations, HSA Co-President Jessica Weaver provided info on HSA initiatives this year and introduced this year's executive board. Last but certainly not least, Dr. Stephanie Allen, the district Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services, presented on the new elementary level Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) program being housed in Sousa this year. Links to the HSA and ICT presentations are below.

HSA

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Dhob-32N3oUAIwccX7BdyUFLB7B3-jKoX5S4IydhzdQU/edit?usp=sharing>

ICT

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1EISUb-Y3A-zY8zQJ8VokgeJGrG-oI7I5YGUKxm6zSLdo/edit?usp=sharing>

Dads' Night Out

Dads' Night Out had an extremely successful return at the Port Washington Yacht Club on September 23rd. It was the best attended Dads' Night Out to date, with over 60 Sousa Super Dads raising over \$5,500 to support the HSA! It was great to see so many new Sousa dads enjoying a fun evening with many of our veteran Sousa dads. Special thanks to Dan Walz for a great night and congratulations to our big raffle winner Stefan Nicodemou!



More than fifty Sousa moms ventured out on a rainy Monday in October to enjoy delicious Mexican food and drink at Margarita's tented outdoor patio. Not only was a fun time had by all, but the evening raised \$1,400 for the HSA. Cheers to the MNO Committee, chaired by Alana Benjamin and Christina Zanetos, and to the local businesses that sponsored the event -- Compass Advisors, beFIT Therapy, Christina Byers Design and Alana Benjamin Group.

Moms' Night Out



Sousa Students in the News!

This year the girls' and boys' bathrooms were painted a gender-neutral white with a red stripe and sported inspirational quotes - changes that came about due to the advocacy of a group of now 5th graders that call themselves The Kid Power Group. Their efforts to champion their cause of equity and inclusion were noticed not just by school administration and their proud parents, but by the ABC-TV Eyewitness News team.

Click on the below link for the newsclip and write-up!



<https://abc7ny.com/bathroom-walls-5th-graders-john-philip-sousa-elementary-school/11091170/>



Upcoming Events

October 25th, 7pm:
Conversations with
Mrs. Sheehan/HSA Meeting

October 26th:
Picture Day

October 29th:
Halloween Parade

November 3rd:
Picture retakes

November 5th:
Spirit Day

November 13th:
Pizza Workshop

December 3rd:
Spirit Day

December 8th, 8:15am:
Conversations with
Mrs. Sheehan/HSA Meeting

Meet Our New Faculty & Staff

There are a lot of new faces amongst Sousa teachers and staff this year.
Read on to find out about Sousa's fantastic new additions!

Matthew DiCarlo

Matthew DiCarlo is the new assistant principal for both Sousa and Guggenheim. Mr. DiCarlo joins us after serving as Assistant Principal of P.S. 110 in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Prior to that, he worked in Brooklyn as a Special Education teacher, a math teacher, and as a teacher coach. A Long Island native, Mr. DiCarlo attended C.W. Post for his Bachelor's Degree in Social Studies Education & his Master's Degree in Elementary Education. In 2016, Mr. DiCarlo completed his certificate in School Building Leadership from the College of Saint Rose. Mr. DiCarlo is an avid skier, traveler, and a passionate Islanders fan.



Priscilla Oh

Priscilla Oh is Sousa's newest kindergarten teacher. She has a Bachelors in Elementary Education and Linguistics, a Masters in Early Childhood Education and a Post-Masters in TESOL. Ms. Oh worked as a NYCDOE Sub and as a TA in Jericho before coming to Port Washington two years ago as a Permanent Substitute at Manorhaven Elementary. A Long Island native currently living in Bayside, Ms. Oh's hobbies include playing sports - her favorites being volleyball and swimming - photography, taking nature walks and spending time with family and friends.

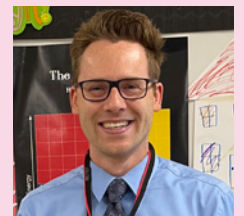


Phyllis Record and Timothy Hynes are co-teaching in the 4th grade ICT classroom.



Ms. Record grew up in Port Washington and now lives in Roslyn Heights. This year marks her 12th year teaching in the district! She's always wanted to be a teacher, so this is a dream come true. Ms. Record loves being an aunt and enjoys doing Peloton challenges, reading, cooking (though she contends she is better at making reservations!), trying new restaurants, decorating, and spending time with family & friends.

Timothy Hynes grew up in Blue Point and recently moved to Port Washington. He has taught in ICT classes for 5 years and this marks his third year in 4th grade. Mr. Hynes is an avid sports enthusiast, loves running and being active and revels in any free time he can spend with his godson.





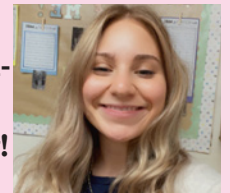
Danielle Corcione is very excited to spend her 5th year teaching as part of the Sousa team, where she is an ICT teacher in the 2nd grade with Mrs. Greenberg. Ms. Corcione confesses to an obsession with Axel, her bulldog/boston terrier mix, and enjoys exercising at Pure Barre in her free time.

Alexandra Caprariello, or Ms. Cap as her students call her, is a Port Washington native in her fourth year of working in the district. A math AIS teacher, Ms. Cap is a graduate of the University of Delaware with a degree in Elementary Education and Middle School Math, and a Master's Degree in STEM from Hofstra University. She has a goldendoodle named Chelsea and loves reading, exercising and cooking/baking. Ms. Cap grew up an athlete and musician and still counts music and sports as a big part of her life (favorites: Zac Brown Band and the New York Yankees).

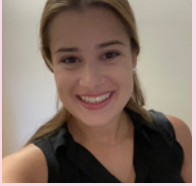


Iidiko Brancaccio is a new reading teacher at Sousa. She is excited to join such a wonderful staff and support students to improve their literacy skills. Ms. Brancaccio was a classroom teacher in NYC for several years before becoming a reading specialist. She attended Adelphi and St. John's University for her undergraduate and masters degrees, respectively. With two children in high school, she is always running somewhere, but does find time for some of her favorite pastimes like playing tennis and going to the beach in the summer. Fun fact: her first name means "warrior" in Hungarian.

Michelle DiSanto joins Sousa as a resource room teacher. She received her Undergraduate degree in General and Special Education and a Masters degree in Special Education with a consultation in Autism Spectrum Disorder. She loves spending time outside hiking, running and reading. She is very excited and grateful to be a part of the Sousa family!



Also joining the Sousa resource room team is reading teacher Jennifer Stabile. Welcome Ms. Stabile!



Emily Kellner is a permanent substitute at Sousa this year. She has lived in Port Washington her entire life and is excited to work in the town she loves. She has two dogs named Peco and Ranger and a gecko named Randall. She loves baking, and taking her dogs for walks at the Sands Point Preserve.

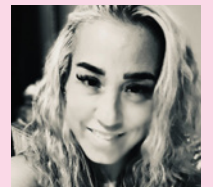
Melissa Passauer, like Ms. Kellner, is a permanent sub at the school who also grew up in Port! She is grateful to become part of the Sousa family. She recently graduated with her Master's and looks forward to growing as an educator at Sousa. In her free time she loves being crafty and staying organized.



Amy DiVito is thrilled to be a part of the Sousa team this year as an assistant in first grade and kindergarten. Working in education represents a new, exciting chapter in her life, after years as an advertising executive, stay-at-home parent, and most recently as a floral and event entrepreneur. In her spare time she enjoys cooking, gardening, exercising to audiobooks and spending time with her crazy terrier, her family, including her husband and three children, and friends.



Jennifer Gale is an assistant in kindergarten. She loves working with children, and also has two children of her own. She feels privileged to work among such incredible staff at Sousa.



Frances Hionas joins the Sousa staff as an assistant, helping in innumerable capacities around the building in addition to supporting the 5th grade teachers.

In a time where technology at school is even more important than ever, we are happy to welcome **Austen Cortese** as the school's new Information Technology Assistant.

