

Harrison Herald

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IN THIS ISSUE: WW Magazine Summer 2026!

West Harrison Community Hosts Pickleball Tournament

There was much excitement as residents brought their paddles and gathered for the West Harrison pickleball tournament on Friday, May 15th.

The event was organized by Harrison residents Nick Dipolito and Harris Kratka, whose passion for the game drove them to reach out to Gerry Salvo to start coordinating tournaments in 2023.

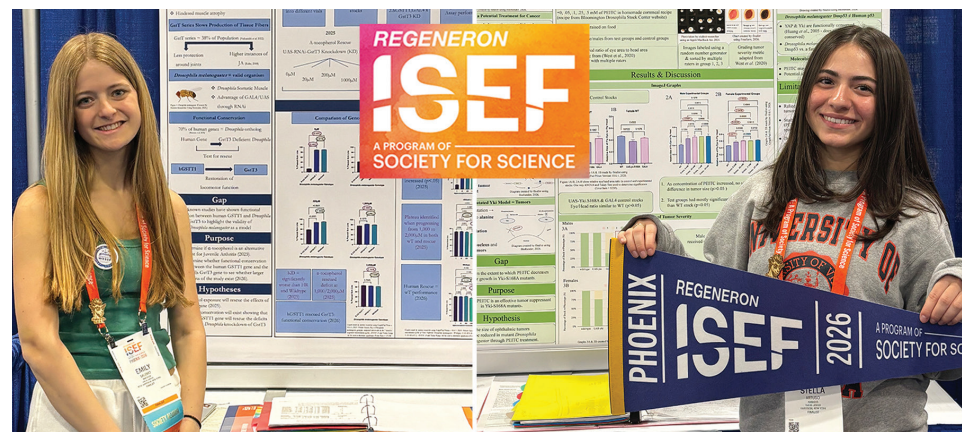
Nick and Harris stated, "We are so grateful to live in this community, and this is a great way for us to give back to our town. The support from Gerry Salvo and our recreation department, Mayor Tom Scappaticci, and everything our community has to offer, are all inspirations for us to continue this tradition. We hope each tournament features one more new or exciting aspect to it, and we look forward to



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Harrison High School Students Compete at Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair



HHS Science Research students, senior Emily Salemo and junior Stella Artuso presented research projects that scored in the top twenty at the recent Westchester Science and Engineering Fair (WESEF) and earned them spots as finalists in the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) held in Phoenix, Arizona May 9-15. As ISEF Finalists, Emily and Stella are among the top high

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Emily and Stella are Science Research students at Harrison High School and have participated in the program since 10th grade, conducting independent original research. Em-

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Harrison High School DECA Business Club Students Compete at International Conference; Liam Azar Earns Silver Medal Recognition

Students from Harrison High School recently joined thousands of top business students from around the world at the 2026 DECA International Career Development Conference (ICDC), held in Atlanta from April 25-29. The ICDC competition represents the highest level of DECA competition and brings together top performing DECA students in marketing, finance, hospitality, entrepreneurship, and business management.

This year, nearly 316,000 students worldwide participated in high school DECA programs, with close to 26,000 students qualifying to compete at the international level. Approximately 500 students from New York State earned spots at the prestigious event, including 17 students from Harrison High School.

Students competed against peers from all 50 states as well as Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, Spain, Japan, and several other nations. Competitors participated either individually or in team events that required written business plans, exams, and professional presentations judged by industry professionals.

Among Harrison's standout achievements was junior Liam Azar, who earned a silver medallion in the Quick Serve Restaurant Management event as a top performer in his presentation category. The recognition placed Liam among the highest-performing competitors in one of



Students from Harrison High School were among the top business students from around the world at the 2026 DECA International Career Development Conference. Junior Liam Azar earned a silver medallion as a top performer in his presentation category.

DECA's most competitive international events.

"Liam's achievement reflects an incredible amount of preparation, professionalism, and dedication," said DECA advisors Joseph Santo and Deirdre O'Brien. "Competing successfully at the international level is an extraordinary accomplishment, and we are extremely proud of him and all of our students."

Harrison High School students competed in both individual and group events:

Liam Azar (Quick Serve Restaurant Management), Jonathan Lewis (Hotel and Lodging Management), Marissa Lusardi (Human Resource Management), Emily Salemo (Franchise Business Plan), Addison Valente (Restaurant and Food Service Management), Arata Yamazaki (Accounting Applications), Cassandra DiBlasi and Selin Cangir (Sales Project), Reese Haines and Brynn Ensign (Business Solutions Project), Jonah Peligri and Avery Sickles (Finance Operations), Riko Suzuki and Zoe Kim (Buying and Merchandising Operations)

Senior Addison Valente, Harrison DECA President and the only student in

the program to qualify for the international competition all four years of high school, reflected on the experience: "Throughout the ICDC we were immersed in a professional environment...that pushed us to think and communicate like real professionals...We stayed focused by supporting each other between competitions. These moments not only helped us succeed but also strengthened our bond as a team."

According to advisors Joseph Santo and Deirdre O'Brien, the success of Harrison High School's DECA chapter reflects the commitment and discipline demonstrated by all 107 students involved in the program this year.

West Harrison Community Hosts Pickleball Tournament

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future planning with our family and friends."

Their first tournament, held in the Fall of 2024, was so well-received by the community that they started working towards a second event. When Gerry told them about adding lights at the courts, they pivoted the format to a night tournament to offer players a more exciting and social experience.

Between May and September of 2025, they hosted three more tournaments. After each event, Nick, Harris, and Gerry discussed ways to enhance the experience for devoted players while expanding participation to more community members.

Last month's tournament featured the support of several inaugural sponsors and drew a great turnout, with a fun time had by all. Generous support from Graziella's Market, Silver Lake Pizza, Planet Pizza, and Total Tee & Signs allowed organizers to hire local students as paid line judges, making the tournament more official.

Nick and Harris are already brainstorming on ideas for the next tournament and looking to add more sponsors as well. Their ultimate goal is to host three tournaments a year in the Spring, Summer, and Fall.

All proceeds benefit the Harrison Recreation Department. For more information visit: <https://www.harrison-ny.gov/recreation#docaccess-8fddb1df705cd6578a1197df7393a4b>



Harrison High School Senior Andrew Gaffin Named National Merit Finalist Winner

HHS senior Andrew Gaffin has been named a National Merit Scholarship Winner, earning recognition for his outstanding academic record, rigorous coursework, strong grades, PSAT scores, demonstrated leadership, involvement in school and community activities, a compelling essay, and supporting school recommendation.

Andrew is ranked #2 nationally by the National Speech and Debate Association and #1 in New York State in Lincoln Douglas debate. This year, he earned 7 qualifying bids to the Tournament of Champions, and reached the final round of two of the most competitive championships in the country. Last summer, Andrew was a research intern at Georgetown University conducting original research into Alzheimer's Disease and hyperimmune activation. He is also a talented pianist with a deep appreciation for music and earned his ABRSM Grade 6 in 2024 and is now preparing for Grade 7.

Andrew was awarded the scholarship from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, selected from more than 16,000 semi-finalists. This honor recognizes top performing high school seniors who demonstrate an exceptional combination of academic ability, accomplishments, and potential for future success.

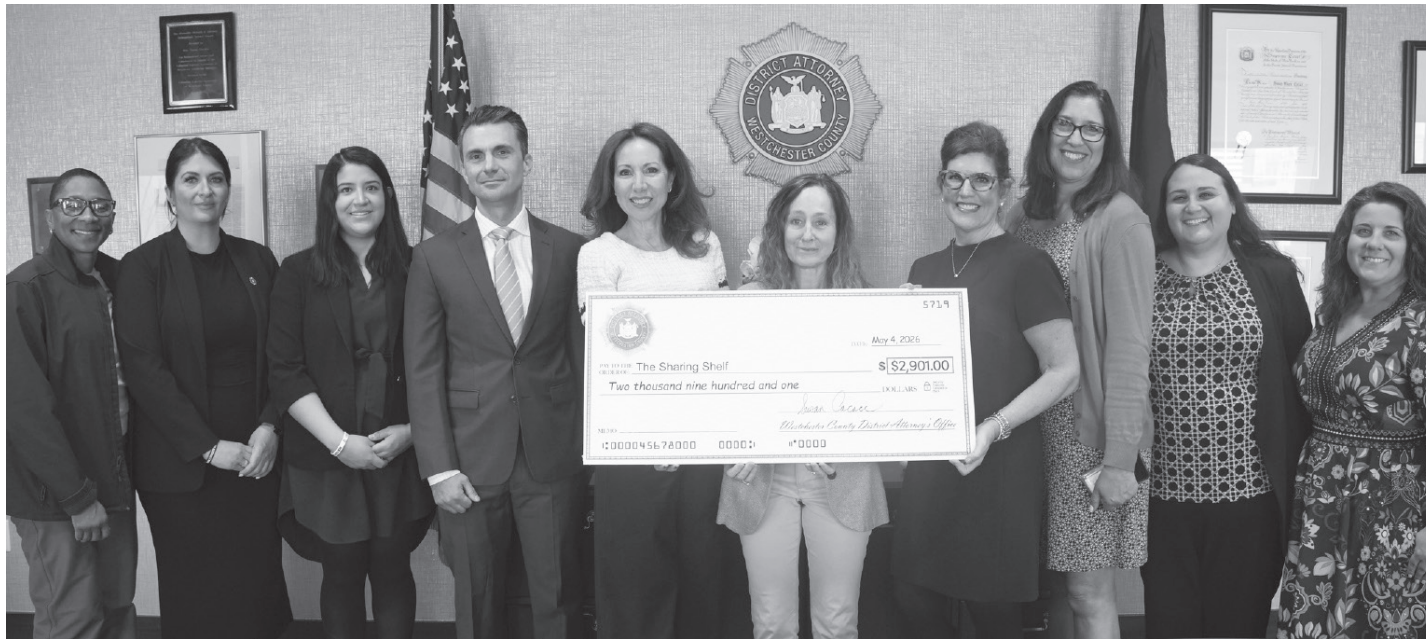


Harrison High School Senior Andrew Gaffin is a National Merit Scholarship Winner and is among the top performing graduating high school seniors in the country.

DA Cacace's Pinwheel Garden Raises \$2,901 for Clothing Insecurity in Westchester

Harrison High School Students Compete at Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair

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Westchester County District Attorney Susan Cacace announced that her office raised \$2,901 through her Pinwheel Garden initiative, which was installed in early April at the courthouse in honor of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The proceeds from this fundraiser, in addition to 15 large bags' worth of new and gently used clothing, were donated Monday to the Sharing Shelf of Port Chester, which works to combat clothing insecurity by offering basic material needs to low-income families in Westchester.

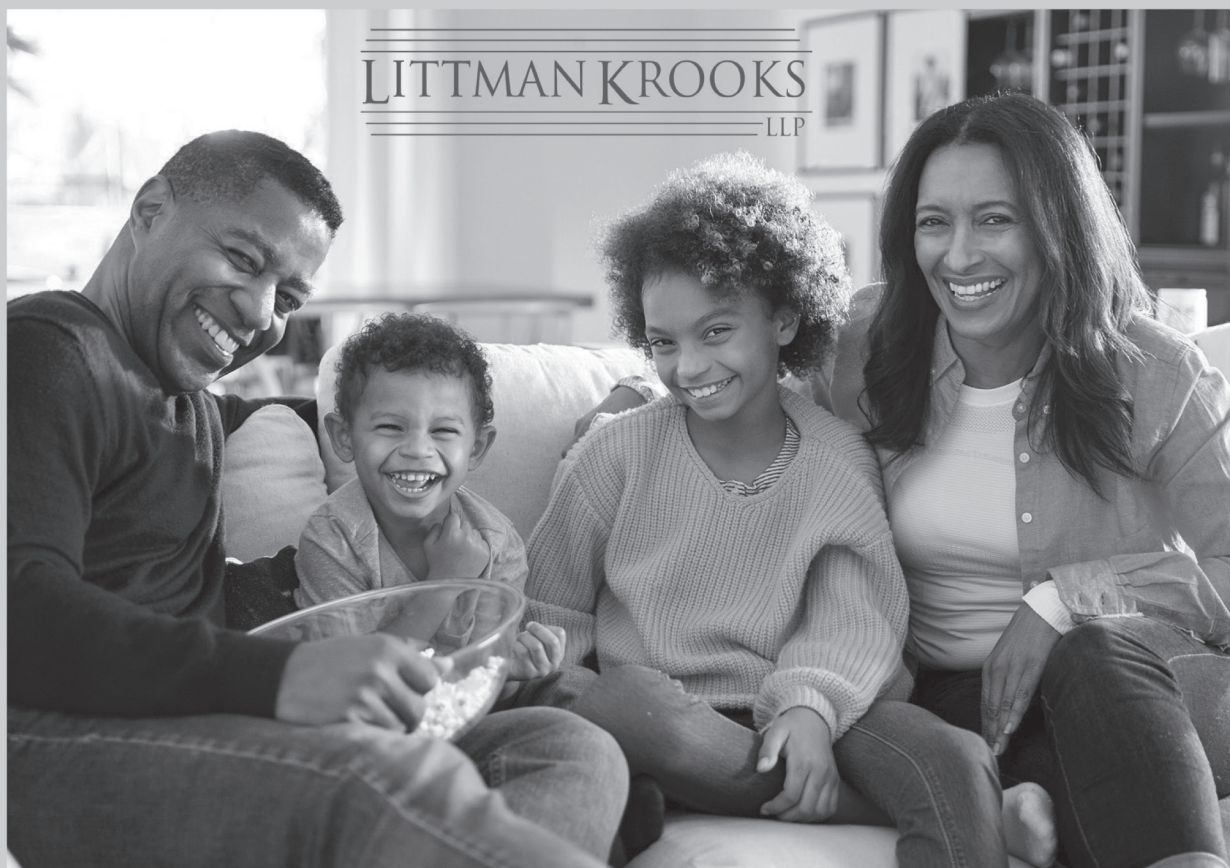
DA Cacace said: "For children who lack basic necessities, life can be a constant struggle, one that impacts every facet of their social, psychological and educational development.

"Children aren't responsible for providing their own material needs, but we all bear responsibility when they go without. I hope that with this donation, we can help make life a bit easier for families in Westchester who just need a little support from their neighbors."

ily's research, *The Effect of a-tocopherol on Locomotor Ability of the Drosophila melanogaster Mutant for Glutathione S-Transferase Theta 3 (GstT3)*, focused on finding better treatments for combatting juvenile arthritis. Stella conducted research focused on the impact of the cancer fighting compound phenethyl isothiocyanate (PEITC) contained in common cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli and watercress, in reducing cancer tumor growth as detailed in her project *Determining the Method by Which Phenethyl Isothiocyanate Inhibits Cell Proliferation and Induces Apoptosis in Cancer Cells Tumor Suppression*.

Science Research teacher Allison Blunt reflected on the students' experience at ISEF, "I couldn't be more proud of Emily and Stella. ISEF was such a meaningful experience and Emily and Stella brought incredible energy and passion to the opportunity."

The Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair is considered the most prestigious international competition for high school student scientists from around the world, and is the world's largest high school science competition.



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Westchester County Beaches Open, Pools to Follow June 26



Grab your towels and sunscreen and hit the beach Memorial Day Weekend as Croton Point Beach in Croton-on-Hudson, Glen Island Beach in New Rochelle and Playland Beach in Rye are open on a pre-season basis.

The beaches will be open weekends and holidays only through Sunday, June 21, then Glen Island and Playland Beaches will open daily beginning Friday, June 26 and Croton Point Beach will be open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays through Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 7. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., with last entry at 6 p.m.; proof of Westchester County residency is required at Glen Island. Entry and parking fees apply.

On Friday, June 26, all five County-owned pools – Playland in Rye, Saxon Woods in White Plains, Willson's Waves in Mount Vernon, and Sprain Ridge and The Brook at Tibbetts in Yonkers – will open daily through Labor Day, from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., with the last entry at 6 p.m.; entry fees apply at all facilities, and parking fees apply at Playland and Tibbetts Brook Park. Proof of Westchester residency is required at all pools except Playland.

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins said: "Westchester's beaches and pools are true gems in our community. They're ideal locations to relax, enjoy the sunshine, and spend meaningful time with family and friends. Whether you're swimming in the water or stretching out on the sand, there's something for everyone. I'm excited to wel-

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins Statement on County's First Quarter Report

"The first quarter report makes clear that Westchester County continues to face significant financial constraints driven by rising costs and ongoing economic uncertainty. Increased expenses related to healthcare which is over budget by \$9.4 million dollars, daycare subsidies which is over budget by \$6.4 million dollars, and mandated services for children with special needs which is over budget by nearly \$2 million dollars, are placing additional pressure on the County budget.

"At the same time, global instability, inflation and uncertainty surrounding future federal funding continue to create challenges not just for Westchester County, but also for governments across the country.

"While strong activity on Wall Street continues to provide some economic benefit locally, many working families are still struggling with the effects of higher costs and growing financial pressure. As we continue to navigate this difficult environment, we remain committed to managing taxpayer dollars responsibly, protecting critical County services and making thoughtful, strategic decisions that position Westchester County for long-term stability."



County Executive Ken Jenkins

Westchester County Department of Environmental Facilities Announces New Appointments

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins and the Department of Environmental Facilities (DEF) announced the appointments of Catherine Parker as Assistant to the Commissioner and Damani L. Bush as Deputy Commissioner, adding experienced leadership in environmental policy, infrastructure operations and public service. Parker will work in the Refuse and Recycling Division's Recycling Office, focusing on public outreach and education initiatives, while Bush will oversee construction and fleet management operations within the Department.

Jenkins said: "These appointments bring valuable experience and perspective to the Department of Environmental Facilities. Catherine Parker has a strong background in public service and community engagement, and Damani Bush brings hands-on operational leadership from his time in municipal government. Both will play an important role as we continue to strengthen our environmental programs and improve services for residents across Westchester."

Department of Environmental Facilities Commissioner Vincent Kopicki said: "We are excited to welcome Catherine and Damani to the Department. Their experience will help advance our work across multiple areas, including public outreach and recycling education, as well as infrastructure and fleet operations. Strengthening our leadership team allows us to better support the programs and services our residents rely on."

Department of Environmental Facilities First Deputy Commissioner Louis Vetrone said: "Both Catherine and Damani bring practical experience and a strong understanding of how local government operates. Their perspectives will help us continue improving our programs and finding new ways to connect with residents and deliver services effectively."

Department of Environmental Facilities Deputy Commissioner Damani L. Bush said: "I'm honored to join Westchester County and contribute to the important work being done here. I look forward to focusing on construction and fleet management while helping ensure operations run efficiently and effectively to support the Department's broader mission."

Department of Environmental Facilities Assistant to the Commissioner Catherine Parker said: "I am excited by this new chapter of my life that will allow me to continue serving the people of Westchester, and further fulfilling the promise that I made to my children long ago – to do everything in my power to leave them a better environment."

Catherine Parker is a former Westchester County Legislator and Rye City Councilmember with a record of advancing environmental policy at the local level. During her time in office, she led initiatives that strengthened the County's sustainability framework, including legislation establishing an Energy Director and Office of Sustainability. She also supported efforts to electrify the County's fleet and championed measures to phase out No. 4 and No. 6 heating oil, improving air quality and public health outcomes. In her new role, Parker will focus on increasing awareness of recycling programs and supporting the County's waste reduction efforts.

Damani L. Bush brings more than 17 years of experience in municipal government, most recently serving as Commissioner of Public Works for the City of Mount Vernon. In that role, he managed a workforce of more than 175 employees and oversaw a budget exceeding \$20 million. He led major infrastructure initiatives, including securing more than \$163 million in funding for sewer and storm water improvements and administering over \$30 million in state and federal grants. Bush also directed a citywide roadway resurfacing program that improved more than 350 streets. His work has been recognized by national and international organizations, and he has received honors, including being named a 40 Under 40 Rising Star by the Business Council of Westchester.

Westchester County continues to invest in environmental programs, infrastructure and public education efforts to support sustainability and improve residents' quality of life. The addition of Parker and Bush reflects the County's ongoing commitment to strengthening its environmental programs and advancing its sustainability goals.



Catherine Parker

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Building Bridges Wellness Camp Supports Students' Emotional Well-Being

From serene nature walks and mindful reading to immersive sound baths, energizing physical activities, breathwork and creative art expression, Rye Middle School students explored a wide range of activities designed to support their emotional well-being.

During Building Bridges Wellness Camp on May 1, the students rotated among six stations that offered a unique opportunity for students to discover healthy coping mechanisms for overwhelming emotions.

"The variety of activities ensure that each participant could find solace and connection in at least one or two experiences," seventh grade school counselor Gabrielle Thomas said. "Building Bridges reaffirmed our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive school community, where every individual is valued and empowered to thrive."

Thomas noted that it was meaningful to see students step outside their usual preferences and genuinely enjoy new experiences. She said she hopes the students walked away with practical strategies they can continue to use to support their social and emotional well-being in the future.



Midland School Second Graders Explore Coding and Robotics



Second grade students at Midland School put their creativity, collaboration and problem-solving skills into action during an engaging hands-on STEAM session led by MakeInspires, a provider specializing in robotics, coding, engineering and creative technology experiences for K-12 students.

During the session, the students explored introductory coding concepts using Indi robots, discovering how different colors could program the mini robotic cars to make 45-degree and 90-degree turns along custom-designed tracks. Working in pairs, the second graders applied these coding concepts by designing and building their own custom tracks using colorful coding tiles. As they tested their creations, the students collaborated to problem solve, guide their robotic cars through turns and obstacles and kept the vehicles on course.

In addition to the hands-on building activities, the students completed worksheets focused on directional movement, sequencing, shapes and coding patterns as part of the lesson.

At the conclusion of the session, the students presented their original track designs to classmates, showcasing their growing understanding of foundational STEAM concepts. The hands-on experience fostered creativity, communication and perseverance as the students worked together to rest and refine their designs.

Rye High School Senior Named National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship Winner

Rye High School senior Grace Wang has been named a recipient of a National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship, one of the nation's most prestigious academic honors. She was selected from more than 15,000 finalists in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program and she is among approximately 2,500 students nationwide to receive the award.

"This recognition reflects not only her exceptional academic achievement, but also her dedication, intellectual curiosity and love for learning both inside and outside the classroom," Principal Andrew Hara said. "In addition to her academic accomplishments, Grace is kind, compassionate and deeply admired by both faculty and peers."

Wang entered the highly competitive program as a junior along with more than 1.3 million students by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screen of entrants. The highest-scoring participants in each state, representing less than one percent of the nation's high school seniors, advanced to semifinalist standing. Wang continued in the competition as one of the nation's highest-achieving scholars.

According to the National Merit Scholarship Program, scholarship winners are selected from among the finalists who demonstrate the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills and potential for success in rigorous college studies. Selection criteria also include academic records, PSAT/NMSQT scores, leadership and contributions to school activities.

Wang will attend the University of Pennsylvania in the fall, where she plans to major in neuroscience.



Grace Wang

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Muscoot Farm Unveils Its New ADA Hayride Wagons



Muscoot Farm is rolling into a more inclusive future with the addition of two new ADA-accessible hayride wagons, expanding opportunities for visitors of all abilities to enjoy one of the farm's most beloved experiences. These new wagons ensure that more guests can take part in seasonal hayrides, making the farm's scenic grounds and programming more welcoming and accessible than ever before.

During the farm's 50th Anniversary celebrations, the Friends of Muscoot Farm were able to raise enough money to purchase the wagons, which will be available for use this summer.

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins said: "These new ADA-accessible hayride wagons at Muscoot Farm are an important step in removing barriers and creating opportunities for all residents and visitors to fully participate in the experiences that make our parks so special. Accessibility is not an add-on, it's a responsibility. Every improvement we make with inclusion in mind ensures that individuals of all abilities can enjoy our public spaces with dignity and independence."

Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation Kathy O'Connor said: "Hayrides are a signature experience at Muscoot Farm, and these new wagons will allow us to expand and enhance our programming in meaningful ways. With increased accessibility, we're able to welcome more participants to seasonal events, educational programs and group visits, so that even more people can connect with the farm and enjoy everything it has to offer."

Additionally, the Friends of Muscoot Farm funded three new sets of stairs to repair and improve the farm's existing hayride wagons, helping to maintain a safe and enjoyable experience for all visitors. These improvements not only enhance accessibility, but also support the continued operation and longevity of its hayride program. Visit www.muscootfarm.org



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New York Plastic Surgical Group Announces Opening of Harrison Location

New York Plastic Surgical Group (NYPS Group), one of the nation's longest-standing and most respected private academic plastic surgery practices, is proud to announce the opening of its newest office at 500 Mamaroneck Avenue, Suite 225, in Harrison. The Westchester expansion grants access to the practice's network of award-winning physicians and marks the practice's 13th New York-area location, complementing its offices across Long Island, Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Connecticut, and New Jersey.



NYPS Group's surgeons provide one of the nation's most comprehensive ranges of cosmetic and reconstructive services, including procedures in breast, body, and facial aesthetics, as well as microsurgery, hand surgery, trauma reconstruction, burn care, and treatment of complex congenital conditions. Consultations and non-invasive in-office procedures will be available at the new 3,500-square-foot Harrison office, with aesthetic and reconstructive surgeries performed at White Plains Hospital and the Surgical Center of Westchester.

"The opening of our Westchester location is an important milestone in our strategic growth and underscores our commitment to delivering world-class surgical care across the region," said Tommaso Addona, MD, FACS, President of New York Plastic Surgical Group. "As a proud member of the Westchester community, I'm honored to bring our services closer to patients seeking advanced aesthetic and reconstructive care. This new office reflects thoughtful, sustainable expansion while honoring the 75-year legacy of excellence that defines our practice."

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Nation's Fallen Heroes Honored at County Memorial Day Service



At a solemn Memorial Day Service on May 22nd at Lasdon Public Gardens and Veterans Memorial, Westchester County paid tribute to the military heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedom.



Joshua Gaccione

County Executive Ken Jenkins and Veteran Service Agency Director Joshua Gaccione were joined by Mount Vernon Veteran Services Director and Marine combat veteran Andrea Molina, Board of Legislators Chairman Vedat Gashi, Westchester American Legion Vice Commander Steve Felsenfeld, and dozens of other elected officials and local veterans in honoring the fallen.

Jenkins said: "This year we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation. But before there was a country, there was an army, founded in 1775. Our freedom came with a pre-condition -- that people would be willing to fight for it, and, if necessary, lay down their lives. More than a million patriots have died in service since then, leaving behind loved ones to grieve and opportunities that could have been. Our gratitude for their sacrifice is real, but we owe them more. We must honor their sacrifice through action by continuing to protect and defend the freedoms they died

for, by caring for the families of the fallen and by supporting those who serve and return, which Westchester will always do."

Gaccione said: "As Americans, we live privileged lives. We live today, free to gather, free to express ourselves, free to worship and live and love. But, as Franklin Roosevelt said, 'Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy, forget in time that men have died to win them.' Our charge is to make sure that Americans never forget. Our freedom endures because some were willing to give all to preserve it. We honor their sacrifice today with humble gratitude and reverence, with promise never to forget them and pledge to continue the fight for freedom so their sacrifice with never be in vain."

Molina said: "In a time where everything is automated, instant and focused on immediate gratification, our memories can easily fade. Today, let us pause and remember the true meaning of Memorial



Day, for those who gave everything in service to our nation — and for the families who continue to carry that loss. *Semper Fidelis.*"

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just over 1 million. Originally home to Native Americans of the Lenape tribe, it is now a rich mix of diverse cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages, and picturesque towns, as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of six cities, 19 towns, and 20 villages. The County is known for its top-

notch public schools and high quality of life. It is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world-changing nonprofits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive Kenneth W. Jenkins, who took office in January 2025 as the tenth County Executive. Focusing on innovation, Jenkins is leveraging technology and fostering business growth to position Westchester as a dynamic and inclusive destination where everyone can thrive. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestercountyny.gov

Westchester County Celebrates Haitian Heritage Month



Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins and NYS Senator Shelley Mayer hosted a Haitian Flag Unveiling Ceremony at the Michaelian Office Building, bringing together members of the Haitian community and local leaders. The event, held in recognition of Haitian Heritage Month and Haitian Flag Day on May 18, honored the history and lasting impact of Haitian and Haitian-American residents in Westchester County.

Jenkins said: "The Haitian community is an essential part of what makes Westchester strong. Their contributions are seen every day, from small businesses to public service to the many ways they help support and uplift our communities. At a time of national division, we remain focused here in Westchester on bringing people together and recognizing the value of every culture. This ceremony was an opportunity to celebrate Haitian heritage and to reaffirm that Westchester is a place where everyone belongs."

State Senator Shelley Mayer said, "I was honored to join the Haitian community and County Executive Ken Jenkins for a flag raising celebration recognizing Haitian Heritage Month. Westchester is home to over 5,000 Haitians-Americans, a significant portion of the diaspora within the New York 'Tri State Area'. During this meaningful occasion, we celebrate the rich culture, history, and traditions of our Haitian-American neighbors. I am proud to stand with them in honoring their vibrant heritage."

Westchester County Board of Legislators Chairman Vedat Gashi said: "The Haitian American community exemplifies what makes Westchester great — a place where cultures flourish and every community's strength adds to our own. Today's ceremony is a moment to pause and recognize the resilience, heritage, and contributions that Haitian Americans bring to this county. We are honored to raise this flag together and to celebrate a community that continues to make Westchester vibrant."

Haitian Heritage Month is observed each May and builds on the commemoration of Haitian Flag Day. The Haitian flag, first adopted in 1803, stands as a symbol of independence, unity and resilience, values that continue to resonate within the Haitian community today.

Westchester County continues to celebrate its diversity and promote inclusion through events and initiatives that bring communities together and recognize the contributions of residents from all backgrounds.

Common Special Needs Planning Mistakes Families Should Avoid



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS,
CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR:
JOEL KROOKS, ESQ.

Planning for the care of a child with special needs is a complex process that depends on many factors. Federal and state laws and policies, funding availability, income levels, and your child's physical needs are all factors that go into creating the most effective and efficient caregiving plan for your child. However, special needs planning is not without common pitfalls that parents and other caregivers should seek to avoid. Here are some common mistakes people make when planning for their special needs children.

1. Leaving assets directly to your child with special needs

Parents commonly draft wills that leave their assets directly to their children, including any children with special needs. However, children with special needs often are heavily reliant on government programs such as Medicaid and SSI. Medicaid and SSI have strict resource limits for eligibility. As a result, receipt of significant property or a lump-sum inheritance can be catastrophic for Medicaid recipients. Instead, parents should funnel inheritances for children with special needs into a third-party supplemental needs trust to protect their eligibility for public benefits.

2. Failing to Obtain Guardianship – or Obtaining Guardianship When Unnecessary

Guardianship may be necessary when a child with special needs turns 18 and becomes a legal adult. If the child is unable to make financial or medical decisions for themselves, guardianship may be appropriate to allow a parent to continue to make important decisions on the child's behalf. However, in many cases, children with special needs can participate in the decision-making process or make decisions for themselves with the support of a parent or other caregiver. In that instance, guardianship may be unnecessary.

3. Failing to Obtain Advance Directives

If children with special needs have the legal capacity to do so, they can execute a health care proxy and a power of attorney. In these legal documents, the children can designate their

parents, caregivers, or other trusted adults to make decisions if they become incapacitated and unable to do so. Executing these important legal documents can help avoid the need for guardianship in the event of the child's future incapacity.

4. Waiting Too Long to Make Plans or Decisions

All too often, parents put off long-term planning, both for themselves and their children with special needs, as unnecessary. They may assume that another child will care for their sibling with special needs or be unwilling to confront their own mortality. Whatever the case may be, waiting too long can lead to rushed decision-making during crises, which is typically not the best way to make decisions. Poor planning can also lead to the need for more expensive and time-consuming actions, such as filing for legal guardianship, when parents could have achieved the same objective by getting guardianship promptly when a child turned 18 or avoiding it altogether by having the child execute advance directives.

5. Waiting Too Long to find Housing

Securing appropriate housing for an individual with special needs is often one of the most challenging aspects of long-term planning, yet many families delay exploring available options until a crisis occurs. Housing opportunities such as supportive living arrangements, group homes, supervised apartments, or community-based residential programs frequently have lengthy waiting lists and limited availability. As a result, postponing housing discussions can significantly reduce a family's options and may lead to placements that are not well suited to the individual's needs or preferences.

Families should begin evaluating housing alternatives well in advance, taking into consideration the individual's level of independence, social needs, medical requirements, and desired quality of life. Early planning also allows parents and caregivers to become familiar with available programs, funding sources, and eligibility requirements while gradually preparing the individual for a successful transition to a new living environment.

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP. He was named 2021 "Lawyer of the Year" by Best Lawyers in America® for excellence in Elder Law and has been honored as one of the "Best Lawyers" in America since 2008. He was elected to the Estate Planning Hall of Fame by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC). Krooks is past Chair of the Elder Law Committee of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). Mr. Krooks may be reached at (914-684-2100) or by visiting the firm's website at www.littmankrooks.com.

Wide Variety of Topics Covered at Harrison Town/Village Board Meeting



BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Harrison Mayor Thomas Scappatici called the Thursday, May 14th Town/Village Board meeting to order, beginning with Report on Decisions Made following Town Board meeting held on April 30th, including resignation of Laborer Daniel Consigliere; probational promotion of Police Sergeant Patrick Varbero to Police Lieutenant; approved probational hire

of Andrew J. Sciliano to Laborer in Department of Public Works (DPW) General Town Bridge Division (GTB), effective June 8th and authorization for Scappaticci to amend the RxBenefits Protect Program to address limit on Glucagon-like Peptide-1 prescription drugs (GLP 1).

Personnel actions included request by Personnel/Benefits Manager Debra Scocchera to accept formal

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Table Hopping with Morris Gut: Soft Shell Crab Season Has Arrived

The season for fresh soft-shell crab runs through September and there are legions who crave this delicacy simply sautéed or deep fried with some lemon and butter. Nothing like a crispy soft-shell crab sandwich with the proper condiments. I am a big fan. They first show up from Florida and the Gulf Coast followed by the popular catch from Chesapeake. As the season wears on more venues will be serving them. Here's where to seek them out locally...

Kee Oyster House, 128 E. Post Road, White Plains (914-437-8535), Owner Ekren & Elvi offer a daily raw bar. The blackboard lists the daily catch and include Soft Shell Crab. And they are pristine. www.keeoysterhouse.com

Alex Bar & Grille, 577 N. Broadway, White Plains. (914-358-1444) Proprietor Alex Ahmetaj offers hefty cuts of aged steaks and chops along with generously served Northern Italian/Continental fare. Plump soft shell crab, too. www.alex577.com

Sea Shore, 591 City Island Ave., City Island, Bronx. (718-885-0300) Jeffrey Weiner and his veteran crew serve soft shells in a variety of styles. Check out all the dining areas. Daily happy hours. www.seashoreresaurant.com

Trattoria Vivolo, 301 Halstead Ave., Harrison. (914-835-6199) Chef/proprietor Dean Vivolo will be serving soft shell crabs out of his vintage diner any style in addition to his popular regional Italian dishes. [www.tratto-](http://www.tratto-riavivolo.com)

riavivolo.com

Eastchester Fish Gourmet, 837 White Plains Road, Scarsdale. (914-725-3450) A Westchester favorite for many years. Don't forget 'Go Fish', next door. www.eastchesterfish.com

Brothers Fish & Chips, 172 N. Highland Ave., Ossining. (914-488-5141) A hidden treasure in a nondescript strip mall. Chef Elmer Oliveros does wonders with his seafood menu. Soft shells are a specialty in season. www.brothersfishandchips.com

La Mer Seafood, 407 Main St., Armonk (914-273-1766) Under new ownership, this market has been serving the area for over 30 years. A sign on the window says soft shell crabs have arrived. www.lamerseafood.net

Bread & Brine, 119 Main Street, Hastings-On-Hudson (914-479-5243) The place bustles inside and out, and 'summers in Maine' is the theme. Soft shells are a seasonal treat. www.breadandbrinehoh.com

Dive Oyster House, 1201 Pleasantville Road, Briarcliff Manor (914-236-3911) Owner Kenny Neziraj will offer Soft Shell Crab as a daily specialty. Fine seafood. Happy Hours. www.diveoysterhouse.com

(Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at: 914-235-6591. E-mail: gutreactions@optonline.net)

Wide Variety of Topics Covered at Harrison Town/Village Board Meeting

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notification of retirement of Senior Office Assistant-Comptroller Mary Kizis, effective July 30th.

Under Actions and Resolutions, request by Reverend Thomas Byrnes, St. Anthony's Church to use the Town's platform stage for the St. Anthony's Fiesta, June 5-7; request by Daniel Gallo, Apawamis Club to hold their annual 4th of July fireworks display on the club grounds, rain date July 5th ; request by Recreation Superintendent Gerry Salvo to approve awarded bid to DED Gaming for game room equipment and installation at the new Recreation Center.

Request by Comptroller Maureen MacKenzie to appropriate Town Fund Balance for purchase of software products from Central Square Solutions, amounting to \$167,670; request by Town Attorney Frank P. Allegretti to consider adopting a Resolution to extend the Multifamily Dwellings Moratorium for an additional six months, expiring on November 28th, referring the matter to Town Planning Board, Westchester County Planning Board and to recognize moratoria as a Type II action under State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR); request by Andrea C. Rendo, Deputy Village Attorney for Town Board to approve the 2026-2027 School Resource Officer (SRO) Agreement with Harrison Central School District.

Public Comments encompassed Stephen Sollazzo, who read a Resolution dated October 18, 1966 naming the Frank P. Sollazzo, Sr. Recreation Center and requested that the plaque be placed on the new Recreation Center. Scapaticci called for a future Resolution as Sollazzo left the sign and plaque from the old Recreation Building with Salvo.

Gogi Larusso stressed that numerous people spoke out about retaining the Sollazzo name on the Recreation Building and to "please keep the Sollazzo name on the Building."

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www.westchester-women.com



Iona Preparatory School Celebrates 107th Commencement Exercises on May 21

Iona Preparatory School proudly graduated 180 young men during its 107th Commencement Exercises held Thursday, May 21, at Iona University's Hynes Athletics Center.

The ceremony featured valedictory and salutatory remarks from Michael Drummey, Jr., of Rye, and Daniel Resua, of the Bronx, honoring their exceptional academic achievements, leadership and service throughout their time at Iona Prep. In their remarks, both students reflected on gratitude, personal growth, service to others, and the lasting impact of their experiences at Iona Prep — collectively referred to as “the brotherhood” — as they prepared to begin the next chapter in their scholastic careers.

“As we leave today and all embark on different journeys and paths, we will be able to live our lives knowing that not only was today an amazing day to be a Gael,” Drummey, Jr. remarked, “but that every single day ahead holds that same promise, because of what we will now carry with us as Iona [Prep] alumni.”

During graduation, it was announced that the Class of 2026 earned over \$40 million in academic scholarships, with more than 77 percent of graduates receiving merit-based awards averaging more than \$62,000 per scholarship. Five seniors received full-tuition scholarships — two academic and three athletics, while nearly 20 percent of the class will continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level, approximately three times the national average, underscoring the exceptional academic and athletic achievements of this year's graduating class.

“We are incredibly proud of our Class of 2026 graduates!” said Iona Preparatory President Brother Thomas R. Leto, CFC, Ed.D. “These young men leave Iona Prep prepared to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ by leading with integrity, serving with compassion, and making a meaningful impact on their communities and beyond.”

Also honored at commencement were sixteen Gael seniors who received Legacy Medals presented by their fathers and grandfathers who preceded them at Iona Prep. Four of the young men, Alfred Blanco of Danbury, Conn., Jack DiFiore of Harrison, Adrian Gocaj of Mount Vernon, and Cole Melillo of Dobbs Ferry have studied along Wilmot and Stratton Roads since Kindergarten.

“We look back with gratitude on the people we have met and the things we have done during these four short years,” Resua said in closing his Salutatory remarks, “and we remain confident that everything we have learned and experienced has built us into better men and will guide us all on our paths in



Michael Drummey, Jr.; Iona Prep President Brother Thomas R. Leto, CFC, Ed.D.; and Daniel Resua

life, wherever they may take us.”

This year's Alumni Award recipient and commencement speaker, Michael Petrillo LS'89, US'93, is the president of MFM Contracting Corp. and PETRO Real Estate Development, and the father of Michael '25, Matthew '26 and Christopher '26, all of whom attended the Lower School like their father. The Petrillos are one of Iona Preparatory School's most recognizable legacy families, with roots dating back to 1928 and the graduation of Felix J. Petrillo. Current patriarch Felix M. Petrillo '57 was on hand for the James A. Moore, Sr. '47 Legacy Medal presentation to his two graduating grandsons. Michael reflected on the principles of discipline, hard work, creativity and the lifelong value of an Iona Prep education (i.e. “the brotherhood”).

“I wish I could sit here and tell all of you that the path was easy, that success came easy, and that you are never going to struggle, but that's not the real world,” Petrillo acknowledged to the graduation class. “I can guarantee that each of you will struggle, get knocked down, feel lost at times, but I would remind all of you to think back to the principles of discipline, hard work, creativity, and the brotherhood that you developed at Iona Prep.”

Michael Drummey, Jr. will attend the University of Virginia this fall with plans to pursue law school following his undergraduate stud-

ies. A two-time Varsity Football State Champion and Varsity Lacrosse State Champion, Drummey distinguished himself both on and off the field. He served as one of the chief representatives for Unified Sports and as President of the Bring Change to Mind Club, demonstrating a strong commitment to inclusion, advocacy and student leadership. In his valedictory remarks, Drummey reflected on gratitude, personal growth, and embracing the opportunities and lessons gained throughout his time at Iona Prep. He credited his time at Iona Prep Lower School, where he was also Valedictorian in 2022, with preparing him for the rigors of high school and making the transition to the Upper School a natural one.

Daniel Resua will attend The Catholic University of America this fall, where

he plans to major in History. He served as Vice President of Student Government and Co-President of both the Prep Readers Club and Philosophy Club. During his junior year, he was selected as an ACTION Ambassador, helping lead Iona Preparatory School to a first-place finish in the Tom Gambardella Advocacy Award competition. He also served as Co-President of Gaels for Life during his sophomore and junior years, and is a member of the National Honor Society, National English Honor Society, Science National Honor Society, Latin Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society, while also serving as an IGNITE Mentor. In his salutatory remarks, Resua spoke about service, community and carrying forward the lessons, relationships and values formed at Iona Prep as graduates begin the next chapter of their lives.

The graduation ceremony was livestreamed and is available on demand at IonaPrep.org/SportsEngine. Photos of the school's 107th Commencement Exercises may be purchased through Christopher Pope Photography.

Recommended for reaccreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools in 2021, Iona Preparatory School PK-12 sits on 37 acres of suburban green in New Rochelle, N.Y., where it educates young men to be moral and ethical leaders. Iona Preparatory School is a Catholic community inspired by the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice as expressed in the Essential Elements of a Christian Brothers Education, developing young men into moral and ethical leaders who are dedicated to Christian service and who strive for spiritual, intellectual, and physical excellence. Iona Prep is Westchester's only all-boys Catholic school to make the “NY top 100 private schools list” on Niche.com. For more information, please visit www.IonaPrep.org.



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