

Students evaluate math techniques at Pi Day Recognition event

Submitted by Dr. Irvin Miller
Director, Math & Physics Exploration

On Pi Day, March 14, 2022, students from Wappingers Central School Districts (WCSD), Spackenkill, Arlington and Tuxedo Park were recognized for their outstanding effort in learning math at more than 5 grades above their grade level. The math enrichment program developed at the Math & Physics Exploration was able to integrate the best of the pedagogical techniques for teaching math so that the students could better understand math and solve problems well beyond what they were taught.

County Executive Marc Molinaro, WCSD Superintendent Dwight Bonk, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Cardwell, Congressman Antonio Delgado, Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney, State Senator Sue Serino, Chairman of the County Legislature Gregg Pulver and Assemblyman Kieran Lalor signed certificates of recognition and/or made speeches praising the students for their mathematical accomplishments.

Town Supervisors Alan Bell of LaGrange, Jon Baisley of Poughkeepsie, Nicholas D'Alessandro of East Fishkill, Richard Thurston of Wappingers, and Ozzy Albra of Fishkill also signed signed certificates and/or gave speeches to praise the students.

Dr. Bonk and Dr. Cardwell kicked off the ceremony with praise of principals, teachers and students involved with the math enrichment program.

Several students and their parents were selected to write speeches and give presentations on the impact that this enriched math program had on them. The Eisley family was very special in that the older son Nathaniel in Van Wyck had taken the program for two years and their younger son Bennett in Fishkill Plains took the program this year.

Nathaniel commented: "Some of the things I took away included confidence, the ability to present to people and answer questions with a lot less doubt in my answers, and a love for math and how math works." His math teacher was so impressed with Nathaniel that he recommend that he become a math teacher.

Bennett said, "The Enriched Math course helped me a lot in my regular math class. Without it, I feel like it would be a lot more difficult to figure out problems and I probably wouldn't be at the top of my class in math. It has



Speakers at the Pi Day event on March 14 included (from left) John Lumia, Ozzy Albra, Veda, Zaynab, Gabrielle, Carra, Richard Thurston, Eleanor, Aanya, Gregg Pulver, Luke, Bennett, Nathaniel, Alan Bell and Irvin Miller.

-Courtesy photo

been a great year."

Their mother Andrea said, "I have been an Enriched Math parent over the past three years, and have only positive things to say of it! Bennett has grown in his confidence this year with the class and loves to ask me if I can do some of the complicated problems he has worked on."

Eleanor from the Oak Grove school compared the techniques for doing multiplication in the enriched math program to those she learned in school. She explained the shortcomings of these techniques by doing an 18 x 18 digit multiplication in which she discovered that in doing it the normal way it would be impossible to get the correct answer, even if you could complete the problem. She was able to complete the problem with the Math & Physics Exploration approach in about 10 minutes with ease. Her parents are so proud of her accomplishments, particularly since math was not their favorite subject when they went to school.

Aanya says, "I use to think my skills were good, but now that I learned all these tricks my skills have improved to a more advanced level. I can also do multiplication in a snap, I also checked my work and I have reduced the number of mistakes I have made. After all my years of school, I have never been taught or have seen the Miller method until now. I thought it would just take the same amount of time and work and just reduce it by 5 minutes. But I was wrong, the Miller method narrowed my time and digits from 30 min, and 324 digits, to 15 min and around 60 digits

(that's a lot better)! After joining the math enrichment program, my work has begun to be neater and much cleaner from mistakes. Since I now check my work to make it clear, I make sure my numbers line up because if I move a digit wrong I can add up wrong and the whole problem could be a disaster!"

Gabrielle also from Oak Grove commented, "As I completed the problem for the first time, I was getting frustrated as I was comparing my answer to the correct answer. So I gave up. As I reached the end for the second time, I never checked it at all! But, before I started this essay, I checked my work finally with the correct answer. And, I had only made one silly mistake. I now realize that as I did the problem again, I was becoming a bit more fluid than how I was during the first attempt. All and all, my reactions for the equation were a bit mixed, but that tells me that if I ever need to do the equation again, I will be ready for it."

Veda from Brinkerhoff said that ever since she joined the program, she noticed a new surge of confidence. Doing the 18 x 18 digit multiplication, she felt it was as easy as doing one plus one. Using these math tricks makes her overflow with pride, because she is learning something that many adults struggle to do.

Zaynab from Brinkerhoff said that "your studying habits effect your learning and understanding of any subject. Dr. Miller teaches us the proper way to study, a method that does not waste your time. What shocked me the most is that studying math does not mean staring at a piece of paper, it's more of doing."

Lawmakers lead push for Lyme Disease funding in final state budget

With zero new dollars included in either the NYS Assembly or Senate One-House Budget Proposals to combat the spread of Lyme and tick-borne diseases (TBDs), Senators Sue Serino, Daphne Jordan, and Alexis Weik joined researchers, patients, and advocates from across New York in a virtual press conference on Monday to urge legislative leaders to invest in research, education and prevention initiatives in this year's State Budget. The coalition is pushing for at least \$1.5 million to be included in the final enacted budget that is slated to pass by April 1.

"As the number of Lyme and tick-borne disease cases continues to climb, and the state sits on a significant budget surplus, now is the time to make meaningful investments in research, education, and prevention initiatives that can protect New Yorkers from the spread of Lyme and TBDs for generations to come," said Senator Serino. "Not including any funding to help prevent the spread of these diseases that impact thousands of New Yorkers each year defies logic. With only days to go before a final budget is expected to be voted on, we are asking our colleagues to do the right thing, ensure that the voices of New Yorkers who live with these devastating diseases are heard, and include significant funding to help put an end to the Lyme and tick-borne disease epidemic in the final state budget."

With New York being home to the second highest number of confirmed Lyme disease cases in the nation, presenters argued that the number of ticks and the diseases they transmit are increasing across the state. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among the infections that can be transmitted to humans through the bite of a tick, Lyme disease makes up over 80 percent of the cases reported to the agency. The CDC also estimates that there are nearly a half million new cases of Lyme disease in the US each year, which makes Lyme the third most common bacterial infectious disease in America. However, due to inaccurate diagnostic testing, the actual number of cases remains illusive.

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Marist men's coach Dunne signs contract extension

By Rich Thomaselli

A week after Marist College announced its succession plan when Marist College women's basketball coach Brian Giorgis retires next year – naming associate head coach Erin Doughy as the new coach – the school has now locked up its men's basketball coach.

John Dunne has signed a multi-year contract extension according to an announcement by Director of Athletics Tim Murray.

Per Marist College policy, terms of the extension will not be disclosed.

"I am very excited to have my contract extended," Dunne said in a statement. "Marist is a special place with great people. We have become very competitive and I look forward to taking the next step in building this program."

Dunne completed his fourth season as the Red Foxes' head coach in the 2021-22 season. In his tenure, the program has raised its level of play on the court while achieving high marks off the floor.

Highlights of Dunne's tenure include:

- Two MAAC major award winners (Ryan Funk, Sixth Player of the Year, 2018-19; Jao Ituka, Rookie of the Year, 2021-22).

- Four MAAC All-Rookie Team selections.
- Three All-MAAC selections.
- The program's best MAAC regular-season finish and overall winning percentage in 14 years in the 2020-21 season.
- The program's longest winning streak in 15 years in the 2021-22 season.
- Won the Samson Bracket championship of the Basketball Hall of Fame Belfast Classic in the 2018-19 season.
- Jordan Jones was one of 10 men's basketball players nationwide to be named to the NABC Community Assist Team for his community work in September 2021.
- Dunne was named a finalist for the Skip Prosser Man of the Year Award in the 2020-21 season.

- 15 MAAC All-Academic Team selections, including a MAAC-best five in 2019-20.

"I'm pleased that Coach Dunne will be our head coach moving forward," Murray said. "John has embraced Marist and is building an outstanding foundation for our basketball program. We believe that he is an exceptional fit for Marist College."

Dunne was hired as the 12th head coach in program history on April 3, 2018.

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