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"Essential  
Elements:  
Schools to  
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# WAPPINGERS

Central School District

## VAN WYCK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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### **A Tribute to Van Wyck Junior High School**

What makes Van Wyck so special? I believe it is primarily because we have great people in it and we do good deeds for others. We teach our young people to unselfishly give back to their school and community. The virtue of giving back to people is our gift to humanity. The more our students contribute, the greater the school community's capacity to do good. Learning to do good carries over into adulthood. Young people learn that doing good by giving back has its own intrinsic rewards that far exceed any monetary value that can be assigned to it. Giving back is a learned behavior that should begin early on in a person's life.

Faculty and staff stress the value of giving back with their students by way of contributing to their school as soon as they arrive as seventh graders. They are nurtured in this mindset. Students are encouraged to participate in sports, clubs and team activities. Approximately 40 percent of our students participate in sports, another 20 percent in clubs and special events, and a great deal more in team activities. When we contribute to special causes we add great value to our school communities. Teams of teachers, for example, are regularly involved in fundraising for worthwhile causes, such as when raising awareness for the homeless, donating to Julie's Jungle, fighting hunger in our local communities, helping the disenfranchised get back on their feet, and tackling other important human rights issues. Our students and staff are always thinking of new ways of helping and contributing to our great society.

This year, we have expanded our reach in civics by purchasing wreaths during the holiday season that lay atop the tombstones of our fallen soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery, who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Additionally, we believe it is our duty and obligation to help teach, preserve and protect our local historical landmarks that often fall to developers for profit. For example, two separate local efforts are underway to help teach, preserve and protect the Griffin Tavern on Route 82 and the Depot on Van Wyck Lake Road, located on the north side of Route 9, near the Van Wyck Homestead. Additionally, over 90 percent of the students at our school participated in the mock presidential election, many participated in International Night, and more continue to participate as members of Student Government, the Debate Club and the Principal's Cabinet...all civic-minded activities.

So, when someone asks the question: "What makes Van Wyck so special?" remember that the examples above are just a few of the many reasons why Van Wyck is special, but mostly because of the great people in it, including students - both past and present!

Dr. Steven H. Shuchat  
Principal

*"Van Wyck Junior High School's faculty, staff and administration, in partnership with our parents, students, and community, will provide a safe and orderly learning environment that supports the academic, intellectual, personal, and social development of children, while maintaining rigorous standards and embracing curricula that prepares our students for college and careers."*