



# Oceanside Schools

## Anchored Together

BY PURPOSE, PASSION, AND PEOPLE

Spring 2023

## OHS Wellness Center Exceeds Expectations

**Center supports student well-being as a foundation for learning**

From the day it opened in September of 2022, the Oceanside High School Wellness Center has been a haven for students who visit during their off-periods to relax, recharge, study, connect with friends, and seek support.



In addition, teachers bring their classes in for workshops that overlap with curriculum. It's a natural fit for health classes, but other students including those in culinary, science and psychology courses also visit for topics relevant to their studies.

Dr. Nina Weisenreder, a certified school psychologist, is the Wellness Center's full-time coordinator. Exuding enthusiasm, she shares a story of a student, a regular at the Wellness Center, who showed up one day with a new student in tow. The new student had recently enrolled in the high school and was eating lunch alone in the cafeteria. The kind gesture is exactly the type of connection that Dr. Weisenreder hopes will continue to grow.

Students are playing a big role in developing the center's appearance and programs, offering ideas when their feedback is solicited and continuing to be involved in the center's evolution.

For example, brochures on wellness topics, created by students, fill wooden displays that Mr. Peter Orlando's engineering students crafted. The classroom that adjoins the Wellness Center, where workshops and yoga classes are held, has been dubbed "The Dock" by students and the logo is also student-designed.

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**Left - Students visit the OHS Wellness Center for a variety of activities. Below - Students write out ideas they're learning about coping and communication. The wall has an erasable finish to allow for changing topics.**



**It's often said that children are the future and will change the world. But what if the future is now?**

**Students are learning that they can address issues in their communities today.**

**Empowering young people to seek solutions helps them develop a positive mind-set about the future and shows them how small steps can lead to impressive results.**

their civic knowledge, skills and actions, mind-sets, and experiences. Civic knowledge includes understanding the history that has shaped the present, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and how the government and society are organized.

Nearly 350 graduating seniors earned the prestigious designation on their diplomas.

Social studies teacher Jennifer Wolfe taught the pilot course, encouraging an environment of open and non-judgemental discussion. These respectful dialogues helped students choose capstone projects, which are required to earn the seal. One student project sought to help people recoup costs for damage to their cars caused by potholes. The students reached out to NYS and U.S. senators for support.

Students also researched the impact of pollution on the Long Island Sound and organized a beach cleanup. Another group worked on voter registration.

## STUDENTS AS SOLUTIONARIES

**Sixth grade Project Extra students researched issues in their communities and proposed solutions, using science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) principles.**

Each school submitted projects to the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow competition and Schools #5 and #8 were named New York State finalists two years in a row. The students displayed their projects at a Solutionary Showcase event. (A solutionary is someone who rolls up their sleeves to help their community.)

## CIVIC READINESS

**Last year, Oceanside High School piloted the new New York State Seal of Civic Readiness.**

The Seal of Civic Readiness, a distinction on high school diplomas, recognizes students who demonstrate the ability to make a positive difference in their communities through



***School #2 Project Extra sixth graders are forging ahead on their project to create floating marshes in Powell Creek. Floating marshes can absorb excess nutrients that are harmful to waterways and marine life.***



# g A Difference

## BUILDING BRIDGES

**“Bridges” is a partnership between the Oceanside and Uniondale Schools. It brings students of different backgrounds together to learn about and discuss complex current issues. Students first meet in grade 7 and gather two to three times each year through grade 12 to explore a variety of topics.**

After being interrupted by the pandemic, the Bridges program resumed in January with Oceanside Middle School students meeting with their counterparts at Lawrence Road Middle School for the first time. In March, the two groups met at Oceanside Middle School. Meanwhile, Oceanside High School students visited Uniondale High School in January. The 9th and 11th graders will meet again at OHS this spring and will attend an event together at Hofstra University.

Students have said they enjoy the friendships they’re forming and the opportunity to respectfully discuss challenging topics. “Conversations were deep; people had completely different mindsets and perspectives,” said Lawrence Road Middle School student Cuthbert Young about the program discussing immigration. “If someone either agreed or disagreed with something said, they responded respectfully with logical reasoning behind it.”



*Oceanside Middle School and Lawrence Road Middle School students worked together to build towers of spaghetti with marshmallows on top. The warm-up activity was designed to engage creative and critical thinking in preparation for the discussion.*

## School #6 Celebrates 100 Days of School

Students eagerly showed off how much they’ve learned in 100 days at School #6. The children counted hundreds of items, wrote about what they would do with one hundred dollars, and imagined themselves at 100 years old.



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## OHS Wellness Center (continued from page 1)

The Wellness Center was developed via a grant that former NYS Senator Todd Kaminsky helped the district to secure. Its purpose is to offer mental health education and support for students and families, with a focus on connection, collaboration, psychoeducation, and help-seeking.

One of the goals for the Wellness Center is to help students develop a repertoire of healthy activities that don't involve screens,

hence the games, markers, and clay available to visitors.

Dailene, a 9th grader, said that she stops by regularly and feels comfortable talking to Dr. Weisenreder about whatever stresses her out. Outside of the Wellness Center, students know they can address their teachers about concerns with their schoolwork. "I always knew that I could ask for help," said Sean, a senior, but it seems less awkward now."



***Smiles multiply when the therapy dogs visit.***