

# Merrick Messenger

## Expanding Our Universal Pre-K Program

Merrick Schools were among 64 districts across Long Island awarded funding from the New York State Education Department to expand their universal prekindergarten programs.

The funding further eliminates any impact to local taxpayers while affording our district the opportunity to offer more children seats in the UPK program.

The district began the program in 2022 with 81 students and expanded to 101 this school year. This funding allows the district to create 36 more spots in the program, clearing the waiting list and adding space for even more of our littlest learners.

Potential students are considered after a lottery and application process. Full-day prekindergarten classes will be housed at Birch, Chatterton and Lakeside for the upcoming year. Students attend specials such as art, music and library, as well as recess time.

The program offered to students in the district is managed and staffed by SCOPE Education Services with assistance from our school district officials. SCOPE already oversees universal prekindergarten initiatives in several additional Long Island districts.



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# ON STAGE PRODUCTIONS ARE *Theatrical Triumphs*

Students across Merrick Schools performed in On Stage productions after months of rehearsals. Fifth and sixth grade students were the actors/actresses as well as the stage crew and sound crews.

From vocal serenades to theatrical performances, each production lit up its respective stage on multiple evenings,

showcasing our talented students and dedicated staff.

The Birch Theater program performed “Seussical, Jr.” Feb. 6 and Feb. 8-9, while Chatterton put on “The Little Mermaid, Jr.” March 13-15 and the Lakeside Theater program performed “Beauty and the Beast, Jr.” on March 19-20.

## BIRCH



## CHATTERTON



## LAKESIDE



# 100 Years of Chatterton

Merrick has a long history of providing students with a quality education, dating back to 1901. A little yellow building on Smith Street housed 38 students and one teacher for decades. For reference, we now have approximately 1,500 students spread across our three school buildings.

The district's first modern school, the red-brick Chatterton School, was built in 1923, and expanded over the years to support growing enrollment. The

most recent expansion was a 5,800-square-foot addition, opened in 2020, that provided a second multipurpose room, as well as a space for the school's academic intervention services.

The Merrick Avenue building has continuously operated for a century, and for years was the district's lone school until Lakeside was built in 1952 and Birch was built in 1960.

*Photos are from the collection of the Merrick Library.*



# NEWS Around the Schools

## Birch Writing Club Earns First-Place Poetry Award

Members of the Writing Club at Birch School are now published authors after they placed first in their grade-level category in the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association's 38th annual Student Poetry Contest. Eight fourth graders in the Writing Club drew inspiration from Whitman's poem, "Song of the Open Road," and penned their own pieces. The anthology of individual poems earned first place out of nearly 5,000 submissions and were later published in a book. On May 5, the students were invited to the Walt Whitman Birthplace in Huntington Station to read their poems aloud and were presented with an award. Students were able to tour the grounds and exhibits at the house where Walt Whitman was born in 1819.



## Chatterton Hosts Mindful March Madness

Chatterton hosted various March Madness activities schoolwide for the month aimed at promoting healthy minds and bodies. During Mindful Mondays, students participate in a meditation activity over the morning announcements and take a "Mindful Minute" throughout the day. During lunch time one day, students were encouraged to "mix it up," providing opportunities for children to speak to peers that they typically may not speak to.



## Lakeside Shines Light on Eclipse Learning

Lakeside School hosted a schoolwide assembly on Monday, April 8, to share engaging and educational information about the solar eclipse. Organized by sixth grade teachers, the event included science facts and safety tips. Students demonstrated how to properly open and wear the protective sunglasses distributed by the school. All three schools participated in solar eclipse activities and/or lessons and each student was provided with special eclipse glasses.



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