



SMITHTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

DIGEST

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY

SMITHTOWN STRONG

Amid all the sacrifices, quarantines and hardships during the COVID-19 crisis emerged a community that showed its strength. Administrators, teachers and students stayed connected, families helped one another and organizations came together to support their community.

The school district showed its unity by standing together and doing its best to maintain their connection. While traditional classroom learning paused, the district found ways to connect via online learning, video chatting and different forms of social media. Virtual spirit weeks gave students and staff the chance to show off their favorite pictures of food, animals, books and creations each day of the week.

“Smithtown is an amazing community,” said Russell Stewart, Smithtown Central School District’s interim superintendent. “As soon as the coronavirus started impacting us, so many people stepped up to help, both at the school and community level. Local nonprofits and businesses did what they could safely do to provide for those in need. School staff worked tirelessly to sanitize buildings and provide meals and computers to students. Teachers developed new ways to deliver content and connect with their students.”

Tackan Elementary School Principal Dr. Allyn Leeds missed her students so much that she drove through the Tackan neighborhood for a chance to say hello. Smithtown High School East Principal Dr. Kevin Simmons appeared on the school’s daily broadcast, while Smithtown High School West modified its weekly bulletin to include wellness tips and information. Many other principals posted daily messages on social media to show their ongoing support and offer words of encouragement to their student body.

Hoping to enjoy some fresh air, communities across Long Island listed scavenger hunt challenges. Students created beautiful rainbows and hung them on windows and doors for all to see. Students walked the neighborhoods, counting rainbows and maintaining a connection with their neighbors. More student-artists showcased their abilities by creating cards and writing messages for those in nursing homes, nurses, doctors, hospital staff and emergency workers. St. James Elementary School students

came together to spread happiness to patients and health care workers at Ross Center for Health and Rehabilitation. Mr. Hart’s kindergarten class at Mills Pond Elementary School wrote notes, pictures and letters of encouragement to the patients at Stony Brook Children’s Hospital.

Accompsett Middle School’s National Junior Honor Society spearheaded a pay it forward activity by finding a safe way to help those who may be in need. Students were encouraged to take a photo and use the hashtag #amspaysitforward.

Smithtown High School East’s concert choir conducted a virtual performance and shared their music on YouTube. East art teacher Tim Needles, who just released a book, “STEAM Power: Infusing Art Into Your STEM Curriculum,” organized a free virtual workshop for teachers on Google Meet to share some of the information and projects with colleagues at Smithtown and in local schools.



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JENNIFER BRADSHAW,
Assistant Superintendent
for Curriculum
and Instruction

“The only way we can get through this is together,” said Jennifer Bradshaw, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. “My heart is with those whose health or livelihoods have been impacted by this virus. Our school district’s priority is putting people first at this time. Home learning structures are in place, but honestly, we’re more concerned with our students’ and the community’s well-being right now. Teachers and support staff and administrators are ready and eager to help, whether with academics or personal family needs. It’s a time for compassion and caring above anything.”



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RUSSELL J. STEWART,
Interim Superintendent of Schools

SMITHTOWN

Brightening the day of those passing by, students showed off their creativity and artistic abilities by creating rainbows on their driveways and windows. Communities throughout Smithtown connected through the rainbows and as families went on walks, they counted the different rainbows. Many displayed positive messages of encouragement and unity as well.



Using online platforms and social media, teachers, administrators and staff members are staying connected to students, sharing positive messages and smiles.

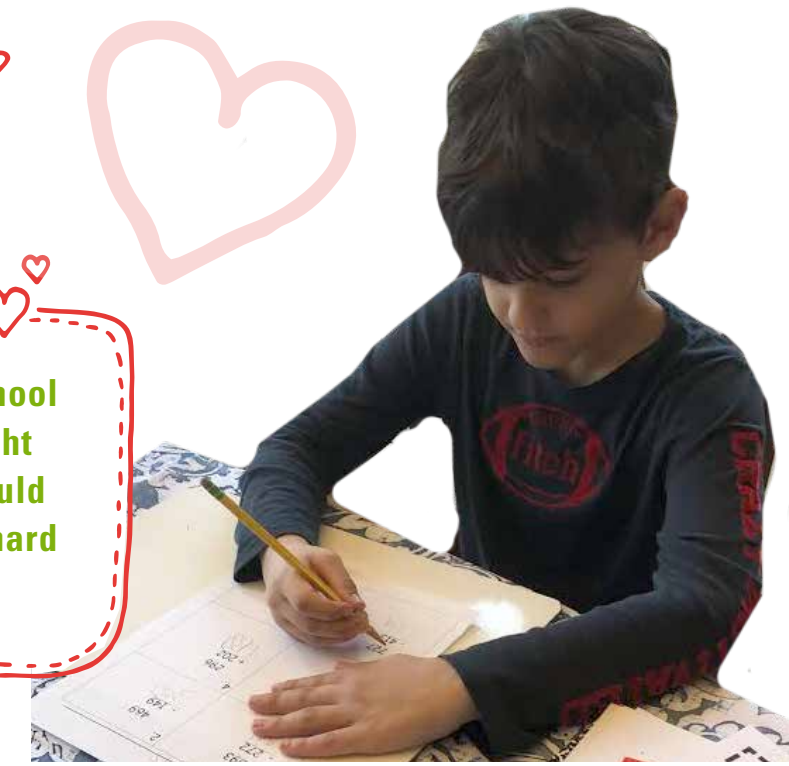
Kindergarten students created handmade cards for children at Stony Brook Children's Hospital, sending words of encouragement along with creative photos.



Schoolwork is important, but there's also time to get creative. Some spent time playing family games, coloring or even finishing this 500-piece puzzle.

STAYING STRONG TOGETHER

Smithtown Elementary School created a student spotlight slideshow so students could show their teachers how hard they are working.



Smithtown High School East art teacher Timothy Needles organized and hosted a free virtual workshop for teachers on Google Meet to share information and projects with colleagues at Smithtown and in local schools.



Accompsett Middle School Principal Paul McNeil showed off the Keva plank bridge he created with his children on the school's Twitter page.



Getting outside and staying active are important, and Smithtown students showed their physical education teachers by capturing their outdoor images. Check out that rope swing!



COMMUNITY

Unites



Smithtown Children's Foundation is one organization that has been front and center during this crisis. It created two Facebook groups to deal with different issues facing the community, one of which is SCF Cares. The group's mission is to help support community members' emotional and financial health.

"We started this group in the hopes of seeing posts and videos that tell us how people are coping with the crisis," said Christine Fitzgerald, co-founder and executive director of the Smithtown Children's Foundation. "Our mission is to show encouragement and support for others. We want to show our thanks to our emergency personnel and health care professionals, military and leaders. We want to support our seniors in nursing homes, assisting living and our veterans."

The second Facebook group is called SmithtownStrongSCF. This group is for local community members and friends of the SCF businesses to promote their business and advertise offers for the community. SCF partnered with local restaurants, such as Alpine Bakery, Husk & Vine and Legends Bar and Grill, to give out meals.

The Children's Foundation is also continuing its work with Stony Brook Children's Hospital. "We work with many local families dealing with pediatric cancer through the SCF and our Silent Night Foundation

chapter," Fitzgerald said. "While the hospital itself is not in need of donations, many of the families dealing with pediatric cancer aren't able to grab a cup of coffee or a hot meal as they stay with their sick children." Since there is a Panera Bread and a Starbucks in the lobby, the foundation began a collection for those gift cards. They also collected hand sanitizers for the pediatric oncology families.

To help with everyone's self-isolation blues, the foundation also issued the "Couch Karaoke Challenge." The foundation asked families to submit a creative video for a chance to win a \$250 Amex gift card, Easter baskets and prizes from local companies such as Duck Donuts, Maureen's Kitchen, Smithtown Running Company, Urban Air Adventure Park and more. Submissions can be any style of music, pop, rock, hip hop, rap, country, Broadway or opera. It could be an original song, cover song, lip syncing, instrumental, dance videos or comedy on any topic. The most creative videos in music, dance and comedy categories were added to the SCF website.

Making sure Smithtown Central School District's seniors are still top of mind, the foundation is also accepting applications (via email and regular mail) for all nine of its scholarships.



Norman Keil Nurseries in St. James had an overabundance of flats of flowers that were destined to wilt and die in the greenhouse while the community remained in isolation. To prevent the flowers from going to waste, owner Normal Keil decided to spread some sunshine around the town by delivering flats of flowers on yards and driveways. As residents of St. James began to plant their flowers, the nursery was hopeful that it brought a smile to their faces during these troubling times. His letter to the community said, "Until we emerge into our new normal, please get into [your] garden, get your hands dirty and enjoy something as simple and beautiful as a pansy in the early spring."



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