



On The Line

Garden City Public Schools
Spring 2020, Vol. 21, No.3

Dear Community Members,

As we approach the final weeks of this unprecedented school year, our thoughts continue to be with you and our students during these challenging times. We wish you and your extended families the best of health.

Over these last two months, I have never been more impressed with the compassion and resiliency demonstrated by our entire community. Our front-line workers have been there every step of the way to tend to our families and keep us safe, while assuring access to much-needed supplies and food. On behalf of our Board of Education and our school district, thank you!

Thank you to all of our students and parents for adapting to this extreme change in your daily lives. You have embraced this new way of learning and surpassed any expectations anyone could have ever imagined. Keep up the wonderful work! Please know that your teachers miss you. Our faculty continues to make daily adjustments on how they teach remotely. Our goal is to stay connected to our students and families and support you as best we can.

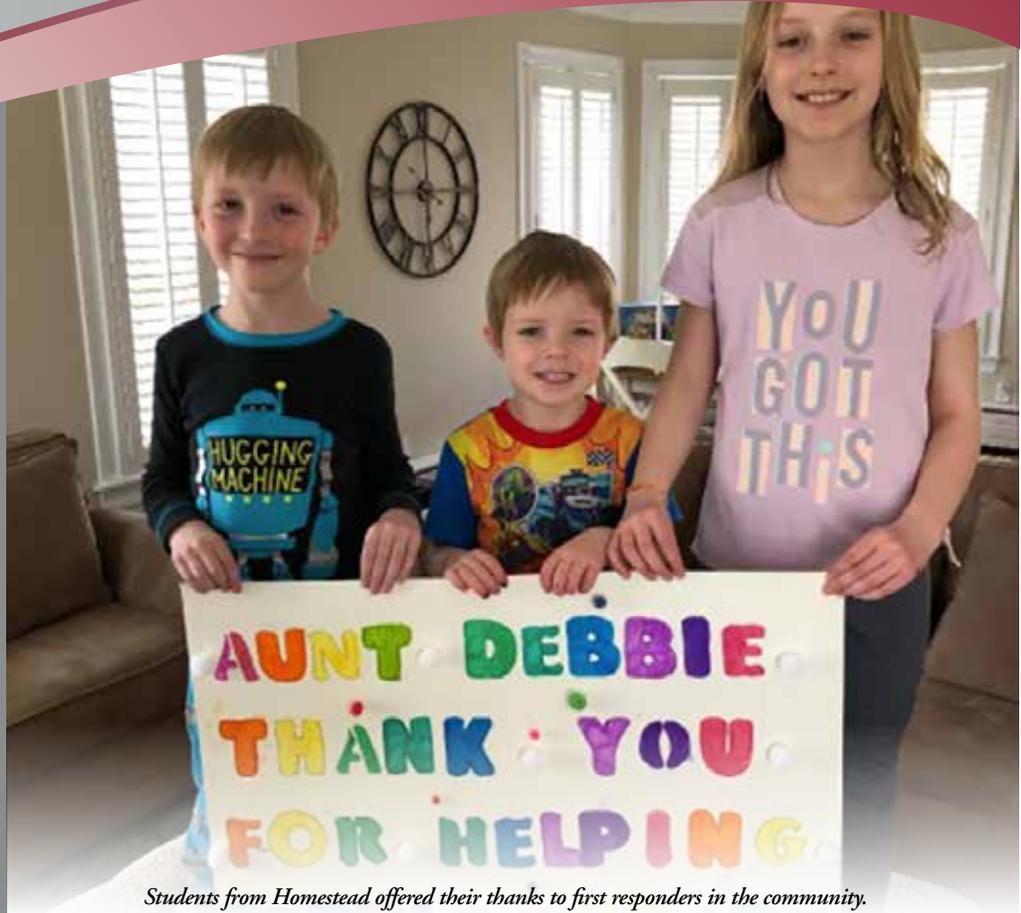
In addition to the learning plans and ongoing interaction between students and their teachers, our website contains several resources, including health and wellness and social-emotional supports, and links to information about services such as grab-and-go meals and child care. Some of this information can also be found in this edition of "On The Line," which provides a little detail into life with remote learning. We also continue to plan for ways to conduct end-of-year celebrations and acknowledgments for students in a safe and appropriate manner.

I will continue to keep you informed through regular Blackboard Connect messages. The Board of Education is meeting virtually and invites you to attend; information will be posted prior to the meetings.

We look forward to the day when we can all be together again. Stay safe.

Sincerely,

Kusum
Kusum Sinha, Ed.D.



Students from Homestead offered their thanks to first responders in the community.

STAYING CONNECTED

From the moment schools officially shuttered, administration and faculty worked together to develop a thorough and thoughtful home instruction plan that would keep teachers connected with students, keep students genuinely engaged and provide them with meaningful, diverse learning experiences. We realize that no matter how similar the content and no matter how hard we try to replicate the instructional day remotely, nothing replaces the daily classroom experience, the extracurricular programs and the interaction with faculty and friends that is being missed.

As we collectively salute all of our

front-line workers for their caring and resiliency, we also thank our parents who have taken on the enormous responsibility of overseeing and implementing their child's education while juggling their professional and personal responsibilities. The entire Garden City UFSD faculty, support staff and administration miss your children and look forward to the day when we can be with them again.

Please continue to follow regular communications from the Superintendent, and refer to the website for information regarding updates and important services available to the community.

Independence and Creativity While Learning Remotely

While Garden City students have enjoyed some of the best instructional technology resources, at the onset of the closure emphasis on the digital learning environment became paramount for all. Families have responded to the challenge of learning remotely through their devices. Apps such as Google Classroom, Raz Kids, SeeSaw and Think Central have given students the ability to collaborate and communicate with teachers and complete and turn in assignments online, guiding their own learning and tapping into some amazing content.

Faculty is making ongoing adjustments to lessons as they adapt to teaching remotely through their own remote professional learning.

Balancing work and play is essential to the success of home learning. Students have been following recommended learning plans by engaging in exercise routines and dedicating parts of their day for creative time, such as baking, board games and puzzles, to supplement their academics. Stewart School student Maeve Garvey used some of her spare time between schoolwork assignments to write and connect with classmates and adults through a blog she launched.

Even more than completing academic assignments, students are encouraged to continue being creative, whether it's through music, fine art, home makerspace activities or other activities. For instance, elementary orchestra teacher Andrew Albani coordinated with his

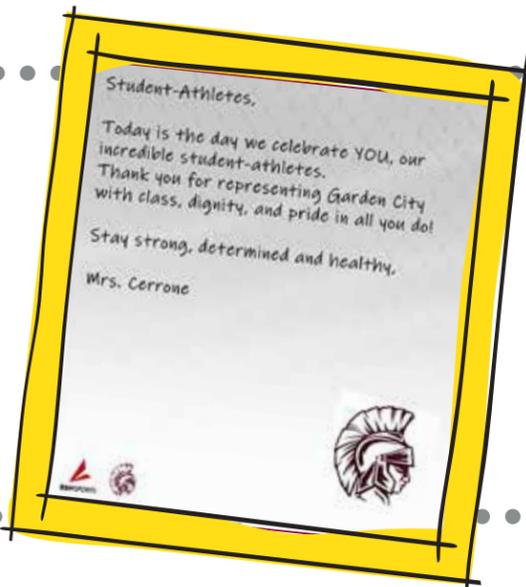
students from Stewart and Stratford elementary schools on a unique home music performance. As a spin-off of Open Book with Jenna Bush Hager, Tia Albig's students at Stratford have been interviewing teachers and administrators about their love of reading.

Keeping learning fun and void of stress has been essential. A virtual school spirit week was held in April to encourage everyone to wear their Garden City colors and participate in different activities during the week. This included a "Send a Kind Note Day." Following the nationwide movement, rainbows can be seen in the windows of homes throughout the community, combining the talents of youth with messages of hope for the future. Students have been sharing these with teachers, too.



Keeping in Touch

Principals have been conducting regular read alouds to young children. Some have connected through fitness regimens, such as yoga with Hemlock Principal Audrey Bellovin and Middle School Principal Dr. Eric Nezowitz's Workout Wednesdays. Faculty members from different schools have been posting videos from their homes, telling their students just how much they miss them. This included a humorous handoff of a note to students between primary and elementary principals.



Words and Strategies to Comfort

Principals, social workers and other caring faculty have been sharing messages of inspiration and support, as well as information to help families cope with the crisis – helping parents to help their children. Additionally, the Garden City UFSD website contains several online resources, including on how to talk to young children about the coronavirus. Social workers and school psychologists remain available to students.

Parent Communication

Regular parent communications have and will continue to provide families with current updates from the governor's office and the State Education Department regarding school closure and guidance for families. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kusum Sinha has been reaching out to families throughout the crisis.



Compassion and Character in Community

Throughout the country, messages of thanks to medical workers, law enforcement, food service and store workers and other front-line workers have been prevalent. This is evident in Garden City as well. Led by 2021 Class President Tim O'Hanlon, the class is conducting a letter writing campaign thanking these workers. Classmates are writing quick notes of thanks, including well wishes to coronavirus patients who are not allowed visitors. The response has been outstanding – just one example of the outpouring of support from students and other members of the school community.



Important Information

STAY CONNECTED to the Board of Ed

In addition to connecting with students, daily meetings are conducted between administrators and faculty to build upon the success of the first several weeks of remote learning. The Board of Education has also been conducting virtual meetings using Google Hangouts. Information to join the meeting can be found on the website in advance of the meetings.

For information about additional resources to help you and your family get through the COVID-19 crisis and to stay further connected, go to www.gardencity.k12.ny.us or follow us on Twitter: @GCUFSD.



From our hearts to your homes, the Garden City UFSD sends our deepest sympathies to all those who have lost a loved one to this pandemic. Our thoughts and best wishes for brighter days are with you. We thank everyone for all they have sacrificed and all they continue to do to help others and help our children. Together, we will get through this! Stay strong, Garden City!

Board of Education

Angela Heineman, *President* Tom Pinou, *Vice President*
William Holub, Stefanie Granville, Michael Cassaro,
Trustee *Trustee* *Trustee*
Dr. Kusum Sinha, *Superintendent of Schools*