WINNERS

SOPHIA DOMOKOS
Physics researcher

Sophia Domokos, a physics researcher, has received a three-year grant totaling $135,000 from the National Science Foundation for a project exploring the inner workings of matter. Domokos, of Manhattan, is an associate professor of physics at the New York Institute of Technology, which she joined in 2018. Before that, she held a visiting assistant professorship at the New York City College of Technology, a provost’s postdoctoral fellowship for academic diversity at New York University and a postdoctoral fellowship at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

KEVIN J. TRACEY
President/CEO

Kevin J. Tracey, president and CEO of Northwell Health’s Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research in Manhasset, has received the 2023 Science Prize from the Hans Wigzell Research Foundation in recognition of his contributions to the fields of neuroscience and neuroimmunology. Tracey, of Greenwich, Connecticut, directs the Laboratory of Biomedical Science. He is also co-founder of the Global Sepsis Alliance, an inventor who holds more than 120 patents and an author of more than 400 scientific publications.

KIRSTEN ANDERSON
Librarian

Kirsten Anderson, of North Massapequa, has been named School Librarian of the Year by Nassau BOCES. Anderson is a library media specialist at Jonas E. Salk Middle School in the Levittown school district, where she has worked for nearly 30 years, and has also served seven years as chairwoman for Nassau BOCES School Library System’s Advisory Council. In addition, she is a past co-adviser of Jonas E. Salk’s Book Club and Spanish Club and has served on the application committees of the Schools to Watch and National Schools of Character programs.

MAKING THE GRADE

Mineola, Hicksville bands win top honors

BY MICHAEL R. EBERT
michael.ebert@newsday.com

Mineola and Hicksville high schools took first place in two of six classes at this year’s New York State Field Band Conference Championships.

The annual event included marching bands from about 50 high schools statewide this fall performing roughly 10-minute shows that were evaluated on factors including musical and visual presentation. It was held at the JMA Wireless Dome in Syracuse.

Mineola High School’s Mustangs marching band scored 93.550, which was the highest among local schools and beat out six other bands statewide to place first in the Small School 1 class. Meanwhile, Hicksville High School’s Marching Comets scored 91.150, which beat out eight other bands statewide to place first in the Large School 1 class.

“We are immensely proud of the countless hours and tireless dedication that our students and staff have put into accomplishing their goals,” said Mineola’s supervisor of fine and performing arts, Karen Bernstein.

Hicksville’s supervisor of fine arts, Chad Wyman, said: “We are incredibly excited and proud of our award-winning Hicksville High School marching band. The students and staff worked so hard this year.”

Other top-performing local schools were: Roslyn High School, which placed second in the Small School 1 class with a score of 92.250; Walter G. O’Connell Copiague High School, which placed second in the Large School 3 class with a score of 84.900; and Division Avenue High School in Levittown, which placed third in the Small School 2 class with a score of 85.775.

PATHOGUE

Cosmetology Program

Patchogue-Medford High School recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new cosmetology program, which will allow students to complete the requirements necessary to apply for their cosmetology licenses by graduation. The program is the eighth career and technical education, or CTE, program offered in-house at the school. It is available to juniors and seniors and already has two full sections and a waitlist due to “exceptional student interest and excitement,” school officials said.

“Since 2019, our CTE programs have grown with the support of our community and districtwide staff and give our students the chance to set postsecondary goals that cater to their passions,” said Raymond Ruiz, the district’s director of career and technical education, business and technology.

PORT JEFFERSON STATION

Dungeons and Dragons

John F. Kennedy Middle School has created a Dungeons and Dragons Club to give students the opportunity to participate in the classic fantasy role-playing game, which has recently increased in popularity due to the film of the same name released earlier this year.

The club, which attracts about 30 students each week, gives children the chance to make new friends as well as to enhance their problem-solving and social skills, school officials said.

“I started playing Dungeons and Dragons when I was in high school,” said adviser and “lead dungeon master” Nicolle Geraghty. “They were strangers, but they didn’t stay that way for long.”

SOUTH HUNTINGTON

Cybersecurity Lab

Walt Whitman High School recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new cybersecurity lab, which is designed to showcase the growing computer science offerings within the South Huntington school district.

During the ceremony, Walt Whitman students gave visitors a tour of the lab. They explained what projects they are currently working on in the school’s cybersecurity course, which is in its second year.

 “[The lab] gives students real-world opportunities to learn about how to correct and navigate through some of the potential dangers of the internet,” said John Murphy, the school’s interim principal.