

## To Honor the Memory of *Lorraine DeBellis*

Last December, Lorraine DeBellis, a long time member of the Harmony faculty, passed away. For many years Lorraine was a beloved English teacher at Harmony. She inspired hundreds of students to appreciate literature and the gift of reading.

This June, students and staff dedicated a beautiful outdoor bench to honor her memory. Lorraine's bench is in the courtyard, under a tree, providing a place for students and staff to read, relax and remember Lorraine. ❁

Lorraine DeBellis Memorial Bench.  
(l-r) Lori Neazer, Ellen Benson and Kathy Nastri



## Save the Date – November 6, 2016 An Afternoon at Harmony



Harmony will be hosting its annual fundraiser on Sunday, November 6, 2016 at the Harmony Residence. This event, which is the major fundraiser for Harmony will feature music, raffles and great food and drink. It's always a fun day so please put Sunday, November 6th on your calendar. Invitations will be going out in September. ❁

Left Photo: Eileen Harney and Ellen Benson  
Right Photo: An Afternoon at Harmony 2015



## A Message From the Executive Director Ellen Benson



This has been an exciting school year at Harmony Heights. The energy generated by 75 bright, engaging and challenging adolescent girls is palpable. It is a joy to observe our students and staff making positive connections which enables our students to reach their goals. One of the issues I find amazing is the resilience of our students. Many of our students have had to fight through a myriad of emotional challenges in order to attend school on a regular basis. Resilience, "the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change" is an essential component to the population in general and particularly important to adolescents. Adolescence is a time of constant change...socially, emotionally and physically. Our adolescents are living in an extremely complicated world. The world is literally at their fingertips due to technology, which although enlightening, can be overwhelming and sometimes dangerous. Our adolescents need inner strength and resilience in order to thrive. Promoting resilience in our students is a daily goal at Harmony Heights.

I believe, as many mental health professions also believe, that resilience skills can be learned. The American Psychological Association has stated, "Building resilience can help our children manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty." Developing resiliency in a child depends on a child's innate strengths and experience of the world. Many of our students have already experienced some type of emotional trauma, which coupled with the typical emotional highs and lows of adolescence, can be paralyzing, effecting their social, emotional and academic functioning. This is heartbreaking for parents, children and often times parents must seek professional help. This is often how Harmony Heights becomes involved with a student and their family. This is our mission. We are committed to each of our students as they begin their journey of developing the skills necessary to build resilience, enabling them to successfully function within Harmony Heights, their families and the world. This is always a challenging, but exciting journey for our students, families and our staff. As we begin our new year, I know we are ready and able to again help our current students and our incoming students to realize their potential and build on their strengths to develop resilience and competence to take on the challenges of adolescence and move forward as successful, competent adults.

Sincerely,  
Ellen Benson, Executive Director

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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## GARDENING IN HARMONY



Each year the enthusiasm for our planting our garden has grown. The girls decide in March what type of vegetables to grow and we start out with organic seeds in our green house as early as the 1st week in April. The girls learn about sowing seeds, transplanting and how and when to pick the veggies. We have used the veggies in our daily salad bar and have done baking activities as well. The girls learned how easy and deliciously fresh pesto sauce is to make and also how yummy zucchini can be to cooked or raw.

Next year we hope to jazz up the field day flower sale with some unique flowers. This easy life skill teaches the girls patience, responsibility, nurturing and respect for where their food comes from and it's wonderful to see how proud they are each week as new things grow.

And remember "growth happens at Harmony in more ways than one". ❁

– Submitted by Tracey Bramm-Hunt, Group Life Counselor

## STAFF RETIREMENTS

This year Harmony said goodbye to four of its most valued staff.

Harmony's longtime cook, Clark August. Clark joined the staff at Harmony in September 1989 and has been making delicious meals for the girls at the Residence and the school ever since. We wish Clark the best in his retirement. He will be missed.

Executive Assistant, Eileen Harney, retired in March, after 31 years at Harmony. Totally dedicated to Harmony, she did the payroll and oversaw benefits for staff and also served as Executive Assistant to both Don Lafayette and Ellen Benson. We wish Eileen and her husband, Ed, all the best as they enjoy their retirement.

Longtime Computer Teacher, Jim Dolan will also be retiring at the end of the school year. Since Jim came to Harmony in 2002, you can always see him clicking away on his camera recording every event at Harmony.

Also leaving this year is Teacher Aide, Patti Rossetti who has been with Harmony since 1998. Patti was an integral part of Harmony.

They will all be missed and we wish them all the best. ❁

## Around Harmony

### FASHION SHOW



Debbie Ceglio and Laurie Metaxas



Ellen Benson and Kathy Nastri



Models: Left -Eva Alamo, Middle - Leslie Anesta, Right - Dori Campisi

The 9th annual Fashion Show was held on April 13, 2016. Fashions were provided once again by Francine's of Huntington. The models pranced down the runway to the commentary of Executive Director, Ellen Benson. Board member, Laurie Metaxas and her family, including daughters Erica and Danielle and her sister, Debbie Ceglio put together a wonderful raffle. It was a fun night watching staff and students look fabulous. ❁



## FIELD DAY

This year's Field Day was held on Thursday, May 24th, on a beautiful, but hot day on the lawn of the Residence. Staff and students participated in numerous games including pass the hula hoop, which was won by the students, a one-legged race and a sack race. Everyone was served a wonderful barbecue lunch grilled by Victor Araya with help from many staff members. There was also cotton candy and popcorn as well as horse rides down at the stable. A great time was had by all of the attendees. ❁

Left: Kathy Nastri and Ellen Benson

Right: Victor Araya

# Harmony Heights Continuing Education Program for Social Workers Announced

Harmony Heights is very excited to announce that it has been certified by the New York State Department of Education as a Continuing Education Provider for Social Workers. Harmony will be offering its first continuing education course in the Spring of 2017. The class will be held at the Harmony Residence. Dr. Charisse Nixon of Penn State-Erie will be the instructor of the inaugural class. Dr. Nixon has been the keynote speaker at previous conferences sponsored by Harmony including ones on Bullying and Eating Disorders and is a well-known expert in the field of Adolescent Psychology. She is currently working with Ellen Benson, Executive Director on developing the course and its topic. Please check the Harmony Heights website [www.Harmonyheights.org](http://www.Harmonyheights.org) for the announcement of the class, its topic and the date it will take place. \*



Dr. Charisse Nixon

## Graduation Day June 24, 2016



Ryan Mahon, Kathy Nastri, Chris Mahon



Allison Greenstein, Sarah Bouche,  
Michele Summers, Lori Katzman

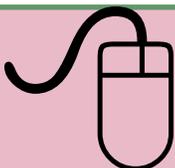


Anita Bloomfield

The Harmony Graduation took place on June 24, 2016 on a beautiful summer day. The graduating class of 21 was the largest in many years and their parents, family and friends gathered to celebrate their achievements. Kathy Brammer, a therapist at Harmony, sang with the American Sign Language Class and Lorraine DeBellis' sons, Ryan and Chris Mahon, presented the first Lorraine DeBellis Scholarship. Board President, Denis Garbo and Principal Leslie Anesta presented the graduates their diplomas. It was a special day for all. \*

## HH 2016 Graduates were accepted to the following Colleges

Adelphi University	RIT
Bloomberg College	Sacred Heart University
Dowling College	Scranton University
Goucher College	School of Visual Arts
Hofstra University	Siena College
Hollins University	St. John's University
Hunter College	St. Rose
Iona College	St. Joseph College
Iowa State	SUNY Farmingdale
LIU CW Post	SUNY-New Paltz
Monmouth	SUNY Old Westbury
Nassau Community College	SUNY Purchase
Ohio State University	University of Pittsburgh
Quinnipiac University	University of Houston



Check out our NEW Website at:  
[www.harmonyheights.org](http://www.harmonyheights.org)