The resilient Ward Melville High School Class of 2020 marked the end of their journey through the Three Village Central School District in a unique way, as the district hosted 11 separate graduation ceremonies during the weekend of July 18-19.

Attendees observed physical distancing guidelines and wore masks when not with family members. Despite these unique circumstances, the ceremonies featured many traditional aspects and provided families with the chance to celebrate this important milestone.

Each ceremony began with a recorded version of “Pomp and Circumstance,” followed by an in-person performance of “The Star-Spangled Banner” by graduating senior Jordan Amato. Class of 2020 valedictorian William Sun and salutatorian Matthew Fiorella delivered eloquent commencement speeches, imparting words of wisdom and collective sentiments about their hope for the future during each of the 11 ceremonies.

“We are at a peak of ambition and aspiration,” Matthew said. “We are all seeking to maximize our potential, [and] how we choose to capitalize on this moment will determine the brightness of more than just our own future.”

“More than any other generation, we know that taking small steps in large amounts can overcome large barriers,” William added. “If we take small steps to improve ourselves, we can better our lives and the lives of others instead of waiting around for the one person to solve our problems....As an upcoming class of empowered youth, we don’t need to sit around and feel powerless. We don’t need to define ourselves by what we don’t have, but can define ourselves by what we can have. We — not just a few of us, but all of us — can change the world.”

During the ceremonies, Class of 2020 Student Government President Sarah Thornton announced that this year’s class gift would be the installation of a new tree, bench and rock, inscribed with a quote, at the front of the school lawn, symbolizing the class’ continued growth and strength. In addition, Principal William Bernhard delivered his congratulatory address in the form of a letter penned fictitiously by the graduates almost 50 years in the future, meant as a reflection on this pivotal time in history and a suggestion of the potential that lies ahead.

The graduates were then called to the podium to receive their diplomas. Each senior was celebrated with rounds of applause and a commemorative photo. Led by Student Government Representative Jennifer Barnett, the class then ceremoniously turned their tassels and tossed their caps into the summer air, marking their official status as Three Village alumni.
Meet the **Top Two in the Class of 2020**

**William Sun – Valedictorian**

William, who will attend Brown University and major in computer science this fall, placed a strong focus on math and science during his time at Ward Melville High School. He was a member of the school’s varsity Science Olympiad team and earned multiple state and national medals for his performance. He was also president of the school’s math team and computer science club. Additionally, he was a Science and Math Research participant, qualified for the International Science and Engineering Fair, and won a silver medal at the Long Island math research competition. Musically speaking, William was the director, creator and manager of Piano for Patients, and he played piano and violin in the school’s ensembles. He was named an All-State pianist, qualified as an All-State alternative for violin, and toured in Spain and Eastern Europe in eighth and 10th grade, respectively, with the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. William was named a National Merit Scholarship winner in 2020.

**Matthew Fiorella – Salutatorian**

Matthew was an equally impressive scholar at Ward Melville. He was president of the Junior Model UN, a member of the National and Spanish honor societies, and a National Merit Scholarship finalist. Matthew was also a member of the school’s band, sitting as first alto saxophone and president of the wind ensemble. Outside of school, Matthew completed an internship at biotechnology startup Vascular Simulations, worked as a coach for Three Village Youth Basketball and took part in the Sports Arena basketball team. Matthew will be attending the Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science at UCLA.

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**Reimagined Traditions**

Even though the end of the 2019-20 school year was different in many ways from other years, the Three Village community did not let the COVID-19 pandemic dampen the spirits of our graduating seniors.

With the help of our school staff and residents, the Ward Melville High School Class of 2020 was honored through a senior parade held in accordance with social distancing guidelines on the school’s campus. In addition, many departments, clubs and parent groups personally delivered lawn signs for students’ homes, provided green and gold decorative ribbons, and even came together to “paint the town” green and gold on the weekend of graduation. The district thanks all who organized these and other events to help make special memories for our graduates.

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**Thank You for Your Service!**

Three members of the Class of 2020 have volunteered to serve the nation. On behalf of our district, we extend our deep appreciation to the following graduates and thank them for their commitments.

- Riley Gavagan – Attending the U.S. Naval Academy
- Zachary Lam – Entering the United States Army
- Jack Thornton – Attending the U.S. Naval Academy

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**Seniors Launch Next Athletic Journey**

Nearly 40 Ward Melville High School Class of 2020 graduates are preparing to take the next step in their athletic careers, as they have committed to play their chosen sport at the collegiate level. To help honor these students, the Athletic Department and coaches put together a congratulatory video for them. A complete list of the college-bound athletes can be found on the district website, and the video can be viewed by scanning the QR code to the right.
Sixth Grade GRADS!

Minnesauke Elementary

Arrowhead Elementary

W.S. Mount Elementary

Setauket Elementary

Nassakeag Elementary
Best Wishes, Retirees

At the end of the 2019-20 school year, the district wished a happy retirement to several members of the instructional, support and administrative staff. The time and contributions these individuals have made over the years is invaluable, and they will certainly be missed.

- Phyllis Cesare-Cardlin, Lead Monitor
- Scott Jimenez, Custodial Worker
- Rosemarie Massano, Custodial Worker
- Michael Milano, Custodial Worker
- Kevin Szczepaniak, Custodial Worker
- Adria Davis, Office Assistant
- Diana Esposito, Office Assistant
- Patricia Goldman, Senior Stenographer
- Joette Hiler, Senior Office Assistant
- Lorraine Jordan, Principal Office Assistant
- Susan Koch, Office Assistant
- Margaret Koepplin, Principal Office Assistant (Confidential)
- Laura Muraco, Principal Office Assistant
- Ann Minnigan, Senior Stenographer
- Linda Bergson, Coordinating Chairperson Guidance
- Michael Bernatovich, Network Systems Administrator
- Catherine Taldone-Camman, Director of School & Community Partnerships
- Kerrin Welch-Pollera, Executive Director of Instructional Technology
- Rosemary Cottone, Elementary Special Education Teacher
- Glenda Gregory, Social Worker
- Loretta Hart, Elementary Teacher
- Kevin Jones, Global Language Teacher
- Mary Lynch, Psychologist
- Kevin Mcgaley, Guidance Counselor
- Nancy Murolo, Assistive Technology Specialist
- Tina Nagle, Social Studies Teacher
- Marisa Ouzounian, Reading Teacher
- Toni Peters, Speech Teacher
- Ellen Schwartz, Math Teacher
- Margaret Trinidad, Science Teacher
- Janet Von Bargen, Elementary Teacher
- Angela White, Paraprofessional
- Terri Hurley, Teaching Assistant
- Anne Smith, Teaching Assistant

P.J. Gelinas and R.C. Murphy Junior High Schools did not miss the opportunity to honor and celebrate their freshman classes’ traditional passage from junior high to high school this year, as they hosted creative moving up celebrations that were mindful of social distancing guidelines.

Students and proud families arrived at the schools in decorated cars and drove up to the front entrance, where they were greeted by building administrators and presented with moving up certificates and individual awards. Many of the buildings’ teachers lined the walkways and held signs, waving and congratulating the students as they passed by.

While the ceremonies differed from those of the past, they were focused on the same core message: celebrating the students and helping to mark this significant milestone.

Reopening Schools, Welcoming in a New Year

The Three Village Central School District, in concert with input from parents and guidance from the state, has created a plan for reopening schools in September. This plan includes both in-person instruction, as well as an option for full-remote learning at the parents/guardians discretion. As new details and updates on the plan continue to evolve, all families are encouraged to visit our reopening page for greater detail, including a FAQ section and links to view our parent forums.