

FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN...

# #TheDistrict



## STEM Programs Offer a Platform for Problem-Solving and Career Exploration

The Morris School District is committed to bringing "real-world" STEM experiences to all students, both inside the classroom and out in the field. Classroom extension programs and special pre-professional opportunities are embedded into all levels of instruction, from Pre-K through 12th grade, in order to provide students with authentic hands-on learning and help them develop essential problem-solving skills. The District partners with national programs such as Project Lead The Way, Girls Who Code, Vex Robotics, Technology Student Association, CyberStart America, Cyber Patriot, The American Rocketry Competition, and the National Society of Black Engineers, among many other organizations dedicated to introducing the next generation of graduates to a range of career pathways and burgeoning areas of study within Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

In both virtual and in-person forums, students at Morristown High School and Frelinghuysen Middle School availed themselves of numerous co-curricular opportunities in STEM this year, and several teams of students received well-deserved recognition for their achievements: [more on page 3>](#)

## Morristown COLONIAL NATION



## Morristown Colonial Nation – Your Home for Past, Present, and Future Morris School District Connections

In the Spring of 2020, the height of the pandemic, it was challenging to feel connected to friends, family, co-workers, and community members. We longed to participate and cheer on school sports teams, watch students pose for prom photos, and sign yearbooks. The Morris School District schools were closed for in-person instruction, but the camaraderie among our community remained strong.

In June 2020, to foster a sense of community, the Morris Educational Foundation launched Morristown Colonial Nation, a place for Morristown High School alumni and supporters to stay connected. Through Morristown Colonial Nation, alumni, community members, businesses, students, staff, friends, family, and supporters of district students can stay up-to-date with exciting news, connect with old friends, and find meaningful ways to engage in supporting our students and schools—ALL FOR FREE! [more on page 6>](#)



## Making Music, Making History

One of the disciplines most impacted by COVID precautions was music—a perennial strength in the Morris School District, where students typically benefit from dedicated instrumental instruction beginning in 4th grade. But in-person ensembles were not possible for the majority of the school year, so music teachers came up with a range of creative remote alternatives that allowed students to practice their craft and further their music education in entirely new ways, safely at home. David Gallagher, MHS Director of Bands, helped his students view the challenges presented by the pandemic as history-making opportunities: "At the beginning of the school year, I told my students that this would be a year unlike any other. But that along every step of the way, they would be making history. The way they learned, communicated, built relationships, and interacted with music all made history."

Even the FMS and MHS concerts, which in non-pandemic times draw hundreds of proud families and community members to share our students' love of music, were translated to a virtual environment for a history-making experience. [more on page 6>](#)



## Alumni Spotlight: Estelle Walker Hinkins

This June, the first Estelle Walker Hinkins Scholarship was awarded to a Morristown High School student. The Bethel Church of Morristown established this scholarship to honor Mother Estelle Walker Hinkins, who graduated from Morristown High School in 1897 with honors and the distinction of class prophet, making her the first African American woman to do so.

Following high school, Mother Hinkins attended Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio, where she earned a degree in Education. After being denied an opportunity to teach in Morris County, she taught in the Atlantic City School District but remained committed to the youth of Morristown, and along with Mrs. Early, started the Phyllis Wheatley Women's Club on Spring Street. One of the club's main focuses was teaching children how to read.

Her former students fondly remembered Mother Hinkins as "strict." They were probably unaware that Miss Estelle, as she was called, was the granddaughter of former slaves in Morris County and desired the best education for her students so that they would never allow that history to repeat itself. [more on page 6>](#)



### MSD BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# MHS Equity & Inclusion Student Council Receives State Recognition as Agents of Change

A dedicated and passionate group of students at Morristown High School has been working diligently over the last year to help the MSD actualize its goals for equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. They are members of the MHS Equity and Inclusion Student Council, which was recently selected to represent Morris County for the NJ State Board of Education Student Recognition Program. The group was recognized for this distinction at the State's Student Recognition Award Ceremony.

According to Interim Executive County Superintendent Dr. Timothy Purnell, the MHS E&I Student Council created a submission that was not only well-crafted and engaging, but which stood out to the judging panel because of its "multi-faceted approach to creating an anti-racist environment."

With the support and guidance of MHS educators Matthew Carmel and Tanya Cepeda, the students have used their powerful voices, courageous conversations, and advocacy to drive important changes to district systems and raise awareness of the impact that racism and racist acts have on students' academic success as well as their social and emotional well-being. Mr. Carmel remarked, "It has been the supreme honor of my career to work with such a dedicated, thoughtful and compassionate group of young people. Together they have taken bold and courageous actions to shape policies which will forever impact the students of the Morris School District. Their legacy of leadership is beyond compare." Mrs. Cepeda added, "Their dedication to creating a more equitable environment at MSD has been their top priority this year. Along with completing their yearly studies, they have dedicated endless hours to this endeavor. This is a well-deserved honor."



The Equity and Inclusion Student Council Executive Board, 2020-21

Since June of 2020, the Council has partnered with both high school and Central Office administration to effect real change in the District. Among their many accomplishments this past year, they provided outreach to MSD elementary schools through story time, encouraged middle schoolers of color to take higher level courses in high school, acted as a support system for students of color in AP and Honors classes at MHS, engaged English Language Learners in the high school and facilitated unification among all students regardless of language, provided input on and revisions to the District's annual Equity and Inclusion student survey and helped Central Office analyze and respond to student data, collaborated with local police departments to improve community

relations with law enforcement, and created and led professional development to all district faculty and staff on a very difficult topic—microaggressions.

The MHS Equity and Inclusion Student Council was founded during the 2018-19 school year in alignment with the MSD's Equity and Inclusion Action Plan, which indicated among many other coordinated objectives a commitment to "provide opportunities for student voice." From five original members, the group has now grown to over 60, including a 13-member executive board.

## MSD Masterpieces

Students Pre-K through 12 brightened classrooms and screens with their creative expression, and art teachers put together massive digital compilations to showcase their students' beautiful work. At this year's Teen Arts Festival, MHS had four Gold medal winners: Maria Paguay, Hawa Kromah, Daniela Cappy, and Corrine Budris! Their masterpieces are shown here.



## Together We Did!



The pandemic didn't stop the Morris Educational Foundation from hosting its annual premier fundraiser, Morristown ONSTAGE, which returned

in March as an all-virtual event. The show sold over 600 tickets and was watched by supporters from near and far, including 21 states and five countries!

Finalists shined with awe-inspiring performances, and the MEF awarded \$1,000 to the 1st place winners, Flight Lights (19 and over) and Maya Bhide (18 and under). Both winners will also perform at Mayo Performing Arts Center when Morristown ONSTAGE returns in 2022. In addition, as the top two vocalists, Maya Bhide and Sabrina Genesis were presented with the New York Jets Take Flight Award to audition to sing the National Anthem at MetLife Stadium.

Morris School District musical talents were on full display as Aidan's One-Man Band took home the \$250 Rossoff Rising Star Award and Panic! at the Mayo was voted the \$500 "Audience Choice" winner. FMS 8th grader Aidan Orbeta wowed viewers by appearing as four versions of himself playing drums, guitar, saxophone, and clarinet. 12 District music teachers, aka Panic! at the Mayo, never practiced with one another but spliced together instrumental and vocal recordings to create a truly joyful performance—one that we so desperately needed.

Through a mix of corporate and community sponsorships, online playbill advertising, donations, and its first-ever Luxury Raffle made possible by Beyer Family Automotive Group, the MEF raised \$150,000 for the Morris School District—proving that through unity, support, and perseverance, nothing is impossible. TOGETHER WE CAN!



Aidan's One-Man Band: FMS student Aidan Orbeta, winner of the \$250 Rossoff Rising Star Award for talent training.



Host Tara Bernie with Morris School District and community hometown heroes getting ready to pull winning tickets in the first-ever Morristown ONSTAGE Luxury Raffle.



Panic! at the Mayo: \$500 "Audience Choice" text-to-vote winner comprised of 12 District music teachers.

## 2021 Morristown ONSTAGE Sponsors

**Education Champion Headline Sponsor**  
Morristown Medical Center

**Luxury Raffle Sponsor**  
Beyer Family Automotive Group

**Show Sponsors**  
Kristen & Tom Cunningham  
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**Prize Sponsor**  
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Morristown Animal Hospital

**Community Sponsors**  
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**Colonial Nation Sponsor**  
The Croonquist Group of  
Janney Montgomery Scott  
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**Talent Sponsors**  
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The Crawford Home Selling Team, Keller Williams  
Deloitte  
Fusion Academy

**Talent Sponsors (cont'd)**  
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Ann & Warren Rhines  
Tanya Seaward &  
Bernard Kuelker  
David Singer, DDS  
Alison & Chris Wilson

## STEM Programs and Career Exploration Cont'd



Morristown High School Math Team, 2020-21: Mrs. Christiana Kemp (team advisor), Michael Polania Vivas, Kaitlyn Chu, Vivian Liu, Zachary Diringer, Sarah Thabit, Catherine Gan Ung, Alexis Feeney, Kinsey Ellis, Jordan Dickman, Keydi Osorio Melgar, Mary Gillen, Benson Liu, Noah Goodman, Milind Bangalore, Elizabeth Gillen, Mrs. Marina Bragina (team advisor), Ethan Huang

The **MHS Math Team** placed first in Morris County for the third year in a row in the NJ Mathematics League series of competitions. Milind Bangalore earned a perfect score across all six competitions, one of only nine students in the state to do so. Benson Liu, Ethan Huang, and Vivian Liu were also recognized as high scorers in the state by the League. Under the direction of advisors Marina Bragina and Christiana Kemp, math teachers at Morristown High, the team meets weekly to wrestle through serious applications of advanced mathematical concepts together as well as enjoy some math activities that are pure fun.

Students in Christina Doyle's **Dynamics of Healthcare** course completed group projects for which they had to research healthcare systems around the world and design their own overhaul of the U.S. healthcare system, analyzing the structure and delivery of healthcare in our country from multiple angles. At the end of January, eight students were selected to present their findings to the point person on healthcare policy in Mikie Sherrill's office. Dynamics of Healthcare is one of three courses conducted in partnership with Rutgers University Health Science Careers Program (in addition to Medical Terminology and Anatomy & Physiology), which allows high school students to earn college credit.

Twenty-seven MHS contestants participated in this year's **U.S. Chemistry Olympiad**, and Owen Kelly and Milind Bangalore scored in the top 1.4% in the country! They will join the top 20-ranked NJ students (out of approximately 16,000) who will proceed to the national competition, squaring off against a thousand students from across the country, representing all 50 states. This is the first time since 2015 that MHS is sending two students to Nationals.

## Speech & Debate Team Excels During Virtual Season



MHS Speech & Debate Team, 2020-21: Mary Gillen, Chris Ruiz, Matthew McDonald, Elizabeth Gillen. Coach Lyn Berman, Jessica Jabbour, Kayleigh McDonnell, Caitlin Tuttle. Not pictured: Talia Wagener, Jacquie Mobus.

The Morristown High School Speech & Debate team celebrated a historic 2020-21 season this year. Because of the virtual format of all competitions and tournaments, the team was able to compete against the best in the state, the country, and even internationally. Topics were as varied as climate change, U.S.-China relations, the Space Force, teen mental health, and immigration policy.

The **MHS Cybersecurity Team**, advised by physics and nanoscience teacher Dr. Mariel Kolker, produced two National Cyber Scholars, Benson Liu and Adrian Huang, and one National Cyber Finalist, Shaan Thakker, in the 2021 National Cyberstart America competition. The team used the Cyberstart America game to learn the tricks of the trade in a gamified environment, convening weekly on Google Meet to help each other solve cybersecurity challenges. Their training in this rapidly growing field covered a comprehensive breadth of skills in topics such as steganography, exploitation, Python programming, and digital forensics.

Six **FMS Quest** students participated in the NJ Consortium for Gifted and Talented Programs' STEAM Cardboard Engineering Challenge. Their submissions earned several accolades: Grand Champion ("Sandy Hook Lighthouse" by Julian Fisher), Best Mechanical Engineering ("Rocketship" by Kate Powers), Best Character Design ("The Bird" by Amaya Davidson), and Honorable Mention ("Stackable Lego" by Sukanya Vasudevan).

Brian Young, MSD Director of Curriculum and Instruction, strongly believes that fostering students' passions outside of classroom time is key to their growth and success. Moreover, Young maintains, "Co-curricular activities can really help students imagine the different possibilities for themselves in college, career, or as global citizens. We provide a range of STEM opportunities that can serve as a conduit to professional networks, career pathways, and state or national-level competitions and challenges so that our students begin to envision themselves as practitioners, designers, and innovators."

MHS progressed to the Finals at five out of six NJ Speech and Debate League (NJSDDL) tournaments that took place from November 2020 through March 2021: the Princeton Invitational, Montville Invitational, Freehold Invitational, Summit Classic, and Randolph Classic. For the first time in MHS history, qualifying teams went to three of the most prestigious competitive events in the same year: the NJ State Championship, the NJ District Tournament for the National Championship, and the Annual Harvard National Forensics Tournament.

Every team member received a merit, honors, or excellence degree from the National Speech and Debate Association, and many won individual titles throughout the season as well.

MHS Latin teacher and Speech & Debate coach Lyn Berman stated that she was "continually impressed all year by the way this team stepped up, wrote and memorized their material, and gave up their Saturdays to compete. They are a great group of students, and I'm excited to see what they will do next. There was so much work accomplished by the entire team—it was wonderful to be a part of."

## RECENT MEF GRANTS

\$341,266 in grants were approved during the 2020-2021 school year and occurred during this time.

### INITIATIVES FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, & SCHOOLS

**At-Home Lab Kits - \$6,500:** MHS 9th grade STEM students learned about new agriculture methods with at-home lab kits prepared by Grow It Green Morristown. Due to Covid-19, in-class labs were unable to occur.

**Art Supplies - \$450:** Painting materials to support a Sussex Avenue whole-school mural experience.

**Buster the Bus - \$12,000:** Robotic bus to provide interactive bus safety education to all K-5 students in October 2021.

**Chemistry Equipment - \$6,500:** Cutting-edge materials to enhance chemistry education at MHS.

**Colonial Nation - \$8,400:** Alumni and community network software to bring together all Morristown High School stakeholders. All Class Reunion held with 470 participants from eight countries, 32 states and 62 class years.

**Cultural Arts Annual Funding - \$32,000 total:** Each year the Morris Educational Foundation awards blanket grants to all ten schools to support cultural arts programming.

**Digital Thermometers - in-kind:** Partnership with CVS Caremark to provide an in-kind donation of 1,000 digital thermometers for district families in need to perform self-check health evaluations.

**Graduation Ad - \$1,300:** To recognize the hard work and future endeavors of our high school graduates, a full-page *Daily Record* ad and print flyer were shared with the greater community.

**Handbells for Frelinghuysen Middle School - \$15,250:** Unable to sing in person, 250 FMS students in the 6th-8th grade choirs participated in in-person collaborative music using handbells.

**Hillcrest Story Walk - \$380:** Outdoor Story Walk to provide a fun, interactive, safe way for students and classes to experience literature outside.

**K-5 Summer Reading - \$10,000:** Students received grade-specific books the last day of school to encourage literacy and activities over the summer, including two virtual book club meetings with teachers and the principal.

**MEF Student Club Advisor - \$2,000:** Support for an MHS staff advisor to guide our student group as they fundraise and support high school students' initiatives. This year the club funded school supplies for students with need.

**Morristown Festival of Books Classroom and Library Books - \$10,000 total (\$5,000 from each org.):** All schools received age-appropriate books focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in partnership with the Morristown Festival of Books to allow all students to recognize themselves in their school's library collection.

**Morristown High School Theatre Sound and Lighting Equipment - \$6,016:** To provide a meaningful educational theater experience, sound and lighting equipment was rented for students to have the tools needed to produce a high-quality spring musical in a limited capacity.

**Pre-K At-Home Learning Materials - \$3,000:** Select school supplies and manipulatives provided to Lafayette Learning Center students to allow for hands-on learning during remote instruction.

**Project Graduation Support - \$500:** Support for Morristown High School's All-Night Graduation Party's fundraiser.

**Remote Broadcasting Equipment for WJSV - \$8,200:** WJSV Radio remote equipment for MHS students to broadcast and run all aspects of the radio station from remote and in-school locations. Celebrating 50 years this year, the station was able to continue broadcasting with this state-of-the-art equipment.

**Senior Signs for All Graduating 8th Graders and High School Seniors - \$5,000:** To celebrate our students' success while celebrations are still limited, congratulatory lawn signs were provided to all graduates.

**State-of-the-Art Weight Room and Fitness Center for MHS - \$75,000 through outside funders:** Worked with the Morris School District to coordinate funding from United Way of Northern New Jersey, the New York Jets, and NRG for a remodeled weight room for MHS athletics.

**Student Learning Resource Packets - \$23,000:** Underwrote the cost of a 72-page booklet of printed activities for all Pre-K-2nd grade district students along with a packet of lined and unlined paper for all Free and Reduced Lunch families in district in order to provide a consistent balance between online and offline learning.

**Summer Plus and Summer Music Program Tuition - \$73,000 (\$1,500 per student):** Through a partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Morristown, each K-5 school and the middle school will send eligible students to the Community School's Summer Plus and Summer Music Program for years to come. This is especially helpful for students this year.

**Tablets for 6-12 Math Teachers - \$6,000:** To increase productivity, clarity, and engagement in mathematics lessons, 30 pen tablets were provided to teachers to eliminate the challenges of writing out mathematical equations, expressions, diagrams, and graphs with a mouse or trackpad.

**Take-Home Books for K-5 - \$20,000:** All K-5 Morris School District teachers and students received grade-level book packets and MEF bookmarks to encourage literacy. This allowed all in-person and virtual students to have the same resources as their teacher for optimal learning this year.

**Tech or Treat for Teachers - \$5,000:** All certified K-12 teachers received Halloween treats or technology materials to assist with in-person and virtual teaching through a partnership with the Morris School District. Headphones, speakers, and other technological items were purchased directly by the MEF from Amazon.com, as all district-approved vendors were out of stock of many of these hot-ticket items.

**Virtual Learning Equal Opportunity for All with MiFi Devices - \$10,000:** The purchase of MiFi devices, or personal hotspots, to ensure all K-12 students have access to reliable WiFi in their remote learning setting was integral in ensuring equitable learning for all students.

**Vocational Work Experiences in the Classroom - \$1,800:** Vocational Task Boxes for students aged 14-16 participating in the MSD Transition Skills Program to obtain prerequisite job skills prior to participating in the Work Based Learning Program.

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

**Parenting Through COVID: Strategies for Promoting Youth Well-Being - funded through the MHS HSA and Joint Municipal Alliance of Morristown and Morris Township:** Dr. John Duffy, clinical psychologist, best-selling author, certified life coach, and parenting and relationship expert, provided parenting guidance and support to help cope with stress and anxiety due to the pandemic.



# LY UNSTOPPABLE!

*accomplished this year!*



## Spring Sports Roundup

In an unprecedented year navigating shortened seasons, schedule changes, and quarantines, our athletic teams made the most of every chance they had to play and focused on their love of the sport. There were many proud moments throughout the 2020-21 school year, and we acknowledge with awe the resilience and remarkable sportsmanship of *all* of our student-athletes. Here we share some highlights from the spring varsity season:

**Baseball:** 9-12; T. Burns: 1st Team NJAC; A. Watson: 2nd Team NJAC; J. Willette: Honorable Mention NJAC

**Softball:** 6-11; J.R. Jones: 1st Team NJAC, National Division; C. Saia: 2nd Team NJAC, National Division; M. Sturno: 2nd Team NJAC, National Division; S. Bedoya: 2nd Team NJAC, National Division; E. Young: Honorable Mention NJAC, National Division

**Boys Lax:** 7-7; L. Davis, 2nd Team All-State, 1st Team Waterman, 1st Team NJAC; J. Byrne: Honorable Mention All-State, 1st Team Waterman, 1st Team NJAC; I. Plott: 2nd Team Waterman, 2nd Team NJAC; J. Hussey: 2nd Team Waterman; L. Chu: Honorable Mention All-State, Honorable Mention NJAC, 2nd Team Waterman; J. Michalski: Honorable Mention Waterman

**Girls Lax:** 12-8; A. Washington: US Lax All-American, 1st Team All-County, 1st Team NJAC; E. Bozza: US Lax All-American, 2nd Team All-County, 2nd Team NJAC; A. Chupak: 2nd Team All-County, 2nd Team NJAC; B. Siverson: 1st Team All-County, 1st Team NJAC; M. O'Brien: 3rd Team All-County, Honorable Mention NJAC; A. Rivetti: Honorable Mention All-County

**Boys Tennis:** 7-10; J. Lim: Honorable Mention NJAC

**Boys Track:** 1-3; J. Brown: NJAC Champion 100m, 1st Team NJAC; J. Coughlin: 2nd Team NJAC; T. Kuelker: 2nd Team NJAC; J. Meza: Honorable Mention NJAC

**Girls Track:** 2-2; J. Robinson: All-County Champion 200; B. Simon: NJSIAA Gr 4, 5th 100, 6th Long Jump, 1st Team NJAC; E. Cerny: NJSIAA Gr 4, 6th 3200, 2nd Team NJAC; T. Webber: 1st Team NJAC; M. Fitzgerald: 1st Team NJAC

**Girls Flag Football:** 1-5-1, inaugural year! MHS is one of 8 schools participating in this pilot league, underwritten by the Jets and Nike. L. McCarthy: Jets Flag Football Scholarship

**Golf:** 18-7; **1st Place Morris County Tournament!** North 1 Gr 4 Sectional Champs, 2nd Place NJAC Tournament, 2nd Place Colt Classic, 2nd Place High Bridge Classic; S. Quinn: 3rd Team All-State, 1st Team NJAC, 1st Place Colt Classic, 2nd Place County Tournament, 2nd Place NJAC; A. Yip: 2nd Team NJAC; C. Meldrum: 2nd Team NJAC, 4th Place Highbridge Classic, 6th Place County Tournament; C. Fixter: Honorable Mention NJAC, 2nd Place Girls County Tournament

*Thank you, MSD faculty and staff!*

**#MSDADVANTAGE**  
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## Making Music, Making History cont'd

Through the ingenuity and passions of the middle and high school music directors and student musicians—and thanks to the wonders of modern digital recording software—individual performances were painstakingly pieced together to produce several videos of spirited virtual concerts, featuring the symphonic and jazz bands, orchestras, and choirs.

An added bonus of the video concert format was hearing directly from students who spoke about how important making music with their classmates had been throughout the pandemic in terms of helping them feel uplifted and connected, even if that connection had taken new and different forms. MHS senior Michael Polania Vivas remarked, "From online music classes to performing in front of a camera, we've all learned something new through the obstacles we've faced ... Whether the concert is virtual or not, music can still have the power to bring us together in the most unprecedented times." Eighth grader Hannah Cohen thanked the Morris Educational Foundation for a generous grant that enabled the FMS chorus to purchase a set of handbells, which gave students the opportunity to still create beautiful sound together when they were

not able to sing as a group in person. "They are so fun, and it is so meaningful for us to be able to make music together during this time," Hannah said.

The students' resilience and ongoing commitment to music is not surprising given the role models they have in a talented and enthusiastic cohort of music educators in the Morris School District. For this year's annual MEF fundraiser, the MSD music teachers formed a band, "Panic! At the Mayo," and won the Audience Choice award for their lively collaboration.

Music instruction at the elementary level took place in a virtual format for most of the academic year, but students still had opportunities to apply their performance skills. For example, they learned a sign language accompaniment to the song "What a Wonderful World," as well as the "Cups" rhythm featured by actress Anna Kendrick in the film *Pitch Perfect*.

Finally, in May, Morristown High School welcomed audiences to the Spring Concert—the District's first in-person concert since December 2019. Families brought blankets and lawn chairs to the



FMS choral students rehearsing for their Virtual Winter Concert using handbells received from a \$15,250 grant from the MEF to allow for in-person collaborative music making! 250 students expanded their musical aptitude and students will continue to do so through this lasting program at Frelinghuysen.

school's practice field to enjoy live music by the MHS symphonic band, jazz ensemble, and wind symphony. It was a testament not only to our students' musical feats but also to their enduring strength and spirit throughout this historic year.

## Alumni Spotlight: Estelle Walker Hinkins cont'd

Estelle was a member of Bethel Church of Morristown, which proudly commemorated their 176th anniversary by recognizing pioneers in education, civic organizations, and the corporate community. The church honored her memory and her work by creating the Estelle Walker Hinkins Memorial Scholarship through the Morris Educational Foundation to award \$1,000 to a Morristown High School senior of African American or African descent pursuing a degree and career path in Education.

MHS senior Noah Richardson has been selected as the recipient of this honorable scholarship. As Vice President of the Class of 2021, member of the Future Teachers Club, and an active scholar in the nonprofit education/leadership organization Platinum Minds, Noah has shown his commitment to education. With plans to major in Social Studies Education at Ithaca College, his goal is to provide all students with an equitable and inclusive education, and ultimately to become Secretary of Education.

Noah believes "that it needs to start with history classrooms. Students of all backgrounds and identities must learn different and similar histories. It builds empathy and self-confidence within children, traits that the future leaders of our country must have if we are hungry to achieve progress in our society." His sentiment echoes Mother Hinkins' values, as does his background. Noah's mother, Nicole Richardson, teaches at Normandy Park School in the Morris



Noah Richardson and Family

School District. His father, Darnell Richardson, is an MHS alumnus as well and is currently the Morristown Police Captain.

## Morristown Colonial Nation cont'd

In December 2020, Colonial Nation hosted the First-Ever Virtual MHS All Class Reunion! The hour-long Zoom event featured a pictorial Then and Now Tour of Morristown High School, narrated by Principal Mark Manning and produced by the MHS broadcasting students. Special keynote guest and MHS '86 alum Andrew Reich discussed how MHS shaped his experience as an Emmy award-winning writer/producer on the hit TV show *Friends*. Polls, trivia, and prizes rounded out the evening to give alumni a trip down memory lane. In the end, over 470 alumni from eight countries, 32 states, and 62 class years connected in one space.

Morristown Colonial Nation will continue to share Morristown High School and Morris School District news, student and staff accolades, spotlights on our alumni and community members, current student and alumni scholarship opportunities, volunteer openings, reunions, events, and more. We invite you to join FOR FREE and connect with more than 750 members by visiting <https://morristowncolonial.nationbuilder.com>. Morristown High School alumni can even securely share contact information to enable graduates to more easily connect with one another. Join today and engage with one another on [www.facebook.com/MorristownColonialNation](http://www.facebook.com/MorristownColonialNation). #ColonialNationProud

## 2020-21 Myles Smiled on You Award Winners

In a year full of uncertainty, the Morris Educational Foundation selected 10 exceptional Morristown High School alumni as the recipients of the 2020 Myles Smiled on You Award for secondary education student loan reduction. The award was created in memory of '13 MHS graduate Myles Mislavsky and is funded by those who knew and loved Myles, his family, friends, and the Golden Bagel Runners.

The MEF presented five alumni with the 2019 Myles Smiled on You Award in its first year. Thanks to the Mislavsky/Martinez family, this year 10 deserving alumni received the award in the amount of \$5,000

each. The recipients who exemplify Myles' many positive characteristics are:

- Alejandra Bedoya, '13
- Leah Brusco, '13
- Alison Fleischman, '16
- Erica Garcia, '10
- Andrea Hormaza-Moreno, '16
- Natalie Lopez, '10
- Tiffany Otai, '14
- Melissa Recarte, '15
- Daniel Robinsky, '13
- Jessica Torres, '15



2020-21 Myles Smiled on You Award Winners

## Profiles in Excellence: Erica Hartman, MSD Tech Director



Erica Hartman

When Superintendent Mackey Pendergrast called together his Central Office team in February 2020 to begin planning for emergency virtual learning in the event that schools had to close, the Herculean task fell squarely on the capable shoulders of MSD Director of Technology Integration for Instruction, Erica Hartman.

were comfortable with the district-approved learning apps that had been carefully curated to complement other instructional modalities. The District already had in place a 1:1 Chromebook program at the middle and high schools, along with a web-based Learning Management System. Through ongoing training, teachers had built an arsenal of digital tools over many years. Finally, there was also an established system to identify and redress WiFi disparities among district families so that students could move seamlessly from school to home. So, while other districts had to scramble to launch the technology systems and processes necessary to accommodate remote learning under emergency circumstances, the MSD was able to leverage its strong capabilities in technology and pivot quickly to a virtual environment in March of 2020—and keep improving upon those capabilities over the next year under Hartman's leadership.



MSD Tech Staff

Hartman says she has been inspired by the resourcefulness of the District's teaching and counseling staff: "They came up with great strategies to engage our students and present clear and quality content, and many of them went far outside their comfort zone to learn new programs, applications, and digital teaching methods. As difficult as things were at times, I am so proud of our faculty and staff for the way they rose to the occasion and pushed themselves to make sure our students' instructional needs were met, no matter what the mode of delivery."

From designing the Virtual Emergency Educational Plan (or VEEP) and establishing guidelines for Google Meets, providing professional development and securing new state-of-the-art laptops for teachers, to overseeing the distribution of student Chromebooks and MiFi hotspot devices, organizing tech drive-thrus for Chromebook repairs, and offering workshops to support district families, Mrs. Hartman worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to ensure that MSD students, teachers, and staff remained well connected.

She credits the District's ability to successfully transition to virtual learning to the efforts of her entire technology team—assisted this school year by library/media specialists and guidance counselors—who helped deploy 3,300 Chromebooks to students, 400 MiFis to district families, 900 laptops to teachers, 50 professional learning sessions for hybrid and virtual instruction, and resolved a total of 2,100 student tech help tickets!

Hartman and other district leaders have been developing and refining the MSD's signature blended learning methodologies, which integrate the best of digital learning and the best of face-to-face learning in developmentally appropriate ways, K-12. As a result, when learning shifted to a virtual platform, even elementary-aged students



To assist with in-person and virtual teaching and as a way to say thanks, all certified K-12 teachers received a Tech or Treat bag with Halloween treats or technology materials. Purchased materials included USB conference microphones, wireless pocket mice, desktop computer speakers, blue light glasses, Bluetooth headsets with microphones, and more!

## Great Year for Girls Swim Team; Molly Webber Named Swimmer of the Year



Swimmer of the Year Molly Webber

Despite the unprecedented challenges of virtual meets and COVID-19 protocols, 2021 proved to be another record year for the MHS Girls Swim Team. The leadership of junior Molly Webber, who earned the coveted Girls Swimmer of the Year title, and the supportive spirit of the no-cut team paved the way for

a highly successful season for the Colonials. The team finished undefeated (8-0) in the Northwest Jersey Athletic Conference and was ranked 12th in NJ.

Said Coach Donna Gelegonya, "I'm very proud of how they handled this year. It's hard to stay focused and motivated when you are not competing head to head. They worked together to encourage and support each other, and their sportsmanship and total team effort really shone through."

Season highlights included a decisive win over conference rival Chatham, 93-77. Morristown also placed first in both the 200 medley relay and the 200 free relay. Kelsey MacMillan placed first in the 100 butterfly, and Molly Webber won both the 500 free and 200 free races. Post-season honors for the powerhouse team were in abundance as well, and MHS was named Division Champions in the NJAC!

## 2020-21 MEF Senior Scholarship Winners

**The Judy and Eliot Steinberg Scholarship**  
Ashley Fernandez, The College of New Jersey  
Michael Steven Polania Vivas,  
The College of New Jersey

**Clifford Starrett Scholarship**  
Shaheer Aslam, Carnegie Mellon University

**Clifford Starrett Award**  
Ebubechakwu Ona, Syracuse University

**The Banky Family Scholarship**  
Katrina Ora, Rutgers University

**Wong Family Scholarship**  
Natasha Dhar, University of California, Berkeley

**George and Michele Becker Scholarship**  
Katelyn Augenblick, University of South Carolina

**Stephen B. Wiley Scholarship**  
Taylor Olsen, Louisiana State University

**Capt. Brian J. McNally USMC Scholarship**  
Karol Bedoya, Boston College

**Dorothy F. Johnson Scholarship**  
Thomas Mainente, University of Pittsburgh

**Javier Avelar Scholarship**  
Karolin Caceres Flores, Undecided

**Class of '79 Morris 8 Scholarship**  
Daniela Orellana Castillo, County College of Morris

**James B. Galbraith, Jr. Scholarship**  
Dylan Cornejo, Rutgers University

**Morristown Distinguished Wrestler Scholarship**  
Eric Jackson, The Ohio State University

**The Morristown High School Class of 2020 Resilience Scholarship**  
Daneyah Thomas, Montclair State University

**Morris Educational Foundation Scholarship in Honor of Ricky Godoy**  
Aidan Riordan, College of Charleston

**John T. Cunningham Scholarship**  
Caroline Nicolai, Le Moyne College

**AT&T Pioneers Scholarship**  
Alia Masud, New York University

**Mary Bentzlin Scholarship**  
Sofia Bedoya, Northeastern University

**The Bruce Chamberlain Scholarship**  
Olivia Hornyak, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

**The Douenias Family Scholarship for Scholar Athletes**  
Madeline Beavis, Rutgers University

**The Ferrara-Myers Grandparents Scholarship**  
Natali Arrendondo, Saint Elizabeth University

**The Hess-Mulcahy Scholarship**  
Anya Coffeen Vandeven, University of Michigan

**The Estelle Walker Hinkins Scholarship**  
Noah Richardson, Ithaca College

**The Darrell Johnson "Let's Get it Going" Scholarship**  
Ebubechakwu Ona, Syracuse University

**Ruth Marantz Cohen French Award**  
Ryan Lynch, University of Georgia

**Morristown Animal Hospital Animal Welfare Scholarship**  
Chloe Saia, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

**The Coach Gil Shaeffer Scholarship**  
Brandon Walker, Monmouth University

**Shirley Shalit Scholarship**  
Leah Frantz, New York University

The Morris Educational Foundation is proud to have awarded over \$376,000 in scholarships to 29 deserving Morristown High School graduating seniors. 13 new awards were created this year, funded by alumni, individuals, and foundations, and honor those who have created or wish to create a lasting legacy for the Morristown High School community. If you are interested in supporting or creating a scholarship, please connect with us at [info@morrisedfoundation.org](mailto:info@morrisedfoundation.org).



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# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN... #TheDistrict

2020-2021

A joint publication from The Morris School District  
and The Morris Educational Foundation

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IN THE DISTRICT



The United Way of Northern New Jersey, the New York Jets, and NRG gifted a remodeled, state-of-the-art weight room and fitness center to Morristown High School through the Morris School District and the Morris Educational Foundation as part of the 22nd annual Hometown Huddle day of service. The \$75,000 makeover included new equipment, flooring, and wall graphics, which will positively impact all students.

Pinned by [Morris Educational Foundation](#)



FMS student Sarah Carroll clinched the title of Morris County Spelling Bee champion, distinguishing herself by correctly spelling words such as "lousicide" and "fructiferous." She then had the incredible opportunity to compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee!

Pinned by [Morris School District](#)



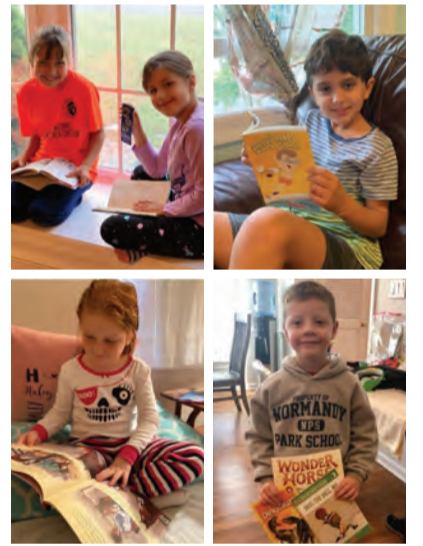
The MEF and the Morristown Festival of Books continued their partnership to promote literacy in all 10 schools of the District through this \$10,000 grant. Librarians purchased age-appropriate diverse books to expand the schools' library collections for every student to find books that reflect who they are, while encouraging a window into their peers' lives.

Pinned by [Morris Educational Foundation](#)



To help preschool students learning at home, \$3,000 of select school supplies were provided to Lafayette Learning Center students to allow for hands-on learning during remote instruction. These materials included crayons, pencils, white boards, scissors, construction paper, and other art materials to spark further creativity.

Pinned by [Morris Educational Foundation](#)



Through a \$20,000 partnership between the MEF and a generous donor, all K-5 students received grade-level book packets and MEF bookmarks to encourage literacy and ensure virtual and in-class students had access to the same reading materials. Teachers also received a set of the same texts to use in instruction, and reading sheets were provided to families.

Pinned by [Morris Educational Foundation](#)



MHS teacher John Madden led a social justice/historical walking tour of Morristown this spring. The tour, which covered recent local events as well as our town's historical beginnings, is part of a larger collaboration between Humanities Academy students and faculty and Princeton and Drew Universities on the history of slavery in NJ.

Pinned by [Morris School District](#)



A legacy mural funded by the MEF now adorns the halls of Sussex Avenue School—the beautiful result of this year's 5th Grade Residency. Students and staff identified important landmarks in Morristown to feature in the mural, which captures a central MSD theme: "a community of communities." Parent and staff volunteers put their painting skills to good use for this special project.

Pinned by [Morris School District](#)