

Superintendent's Column

The opening week of school this year happened to coincide with the hottest week of the entire summer. While I am sure a number of students were probably thinking of how nice it would be to have had a few more days riding waves in the ocean, the spirit of the majority of our youngsters reflected their happiness and enthusiasm about being back in their second "home" for the next 180+ days, whether at Munsey Park, Shelter Rock, or our secondary school.

Such a positive feeling about returning is hardly a surprise, given that there is so much good work and spirit evident on a consistent basis in our schools. If we flashback to the final days of the 2013-2014 school year, the moving up ceremonies at Munsey Park and Shelter Rock, as well as the graduation ceremony at the high school, reveal why our schools are so special to our students and staff. Kayla Hsu and Julianna Santella, now seventh graders at the secondary school recalled very fond memories of their experiences at Munsey Park and Shelter Rock. Kayla said, "Munsey Park is a really happy place, people are really nice. Teachers are kind to the students and I think many people learn a lot." Julianna shared that "all the teachers are very good, very helpful. It (Shelter Rock) feels like you are walking around your house; someone is always there for you."

Lisa and Paul Goring, mother and father of Andrew Goring at the secondary school, captured a very special Manhasset moment with a very inspiring and heartfelt letter. Their letter reads, in part, as follows:

"Thank you for providing our son Andrew with the opportunity to walk with the Class of 2014. Although Andrew's needs dictate that he will need to receive services through the school district until he is twenty-one, we wanted this graduation ceremony to be shared with the classmates with whom he has grown up. We are fortunate in that Andrew has spent the past twelve years in school with the same classmates who have embraced him as a full and equal part of the school community...."

On superintendent's conference day, I showed our entire team of teachers, administrators and the non-instructional support staff the video clip of Andrew's name being called at the ceremony and Andrew repeatedly pumping his fist in joy as he shook the hands of friends and hugged several people near the podium who were congratulating him. Andrew's parents were incredibly proud of all of "those who believed in Andrew and have provided him with opportunities to succeed."

Their words should resonate with all of us – parents, instructional and non-instructional support staff, teachers and administrators. For the 2014-15 school year, we have hired a number of highly qualified and very capable teachers who are in the process of assimilating into a very strong, experienced staff. Our collective mission is to care about each and every child where the personal touch is evident and where we champion the needs of the students we work with on a daily basis. Hopefully, all of our students can have very uplifting experiences, similar to what Kayla, Julianna and Andrew have experienced in their school lives.

