



LINDY SPOTLIGHT

LINDENHURST PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Lindenhurst Union Free School District

DECEMBER 2011

Confronting the Challenge

BOE Prepares for 2% Tax Cap; Seeks Community Input

As many Lindenhurst residents are aware, the past several budget seasons have been difficult for the school district, to say the least. Escalating costs mandated by New York State, coupled with a decline in state aid revenue, have presented a challenge for the district. Over the course of the past three years, the district has made major changes to reduce costs. These included altering transportation guidelines, eliminating teaching, administrative, and non-instructional positions, and scaling down the athletic program. While these cuts were painful to make, they were necessary in order to present reasonable budgets to the community.

Looking ahead to 2012-2013, the district's budget challenges will unfortunately continue. As many residents are aware, the New York State Legislature passed a law in June 2011 that limits the tax levy increase to 2% (or the current rate of inflation, whichever is less) for all school districts and municipalities. For school districts, the cap first impacts the 2012-2013 budget and will remain in effect for five years. The cap limits the year-to-year increase in the amount of money that districts can collect in property taxes.

The Lindenhurst School District – like all others in the state – is bound by contractual increases in salaries and benefits. Unless various bargaining units make concessions, the district faces steep cuts in programs and staff due to the limitations of the tax cap. Programs at risk include full-day kindergarten, elementary music, fine arts electives, the Orion program, home economics, technology electives,

JROTC, and the dance program.

Under the tax cap law, districts may propose a budget that exceeds the 2% levy; however, 60% of voters would need to vote “yes” for the budget to pass (this is called a supermajority). If voters do not approve the increase proposed by the Lindenhurst School District, the district would be required to adopt a contingency budget with a zero percent increase in the tax levy.

To date, the Lindenhurst Board of Education and administration have not made any decisions as to what the proposed budget for 2012-13 will be. According to Superintendent of Schools Richard Nathan, “We are ready to confront this challenge, but we need to hear from the Lindenhurst community. The district is going to have to make some difficult decisions

in the next several months, and it is vital for us to garner feedback from community residents. It is more important than ever to become informed about the complex issues shaping school district budgets and educational programs.”

In February and March, the Board of Education will host a series of budget workshops. Please make every effort to attend and offer input on how to maintain the quality of a Lindenhurst education while meeting the fiscal constraints that a tax cap presents. Workshop dates will be posted on the district's website, www.lindenhurstschools.org, and will also be included in the next edition of *Lindy Spotlight*.

“The district is going to have to make some difficult decisions in the next several months, and it is vital for us to garner feedback from community residents.”

LINDENHURST PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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TAX CAP FACTS: *By the Numbers*

- In order to conform to the 2% tax cap, the Lindenhurst School District anticipates a \$2.83 million deficit for 2012-13.
- The anticipated deficit translates to the elimination of approximately 30-35 instructional positions.
- 50% or more of voters must approve the budget, even with the 2% cap. If the budget fails twice, the allowable tax levy increase is 0%.

Board of Education Honored



The Lindenhurst Board of Education was honored at a recent Council of PTAs meeting at Albany Avenue Elementary School for their hard work and dedication to the district. In celebration of School Board Recognition Week, each Board member was presented with a black or red cape, symbolizing the “super” job he or she does as an officer or trustee of the Board of Education.

Thank you to Board President Edward Murphy, Jr., Vice President Donna Hochman, and trustees Patricia Ames, Julie Bartolomeo, Mary Ellen Cunningham, Raymond Doran, Edward Langone, Valerie McKenna, and Robert Vitiello for their consistent striving for improvement and excellence of the Lindenhurst School District.

Conference Day *Enhances Knowledge*

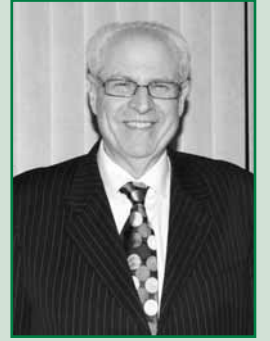
The Lindenhurst School District conducted its annual Superintendent's Conference Day on Election Day, November 8. Many of the district's employees gathered together for a day of professional development and to brainstorm ideas to continually improve our schools.

“Many workshops were taught by Lindenhurst teachers,” explained Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Personnel Dr. Robert Tymann. The focus of the workshops included SMART Board technology, assessments, writing and eBoards, as well as teaching vocabulary, improving communication, and preparing students for the 21st century. The afternoon workshops were divided into smaller departmental sessions.



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE:

Everyone is familiar with “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” one of Aesop's Fables. The tale concerns a shepherd boy who tricks nearby villagers into thinking a wolf is attacking his flock. He repeats this so many times that when the sheep are actually confronted by a wolf, the villagers do not believe his cries for help and the flock is destroyed. The fable teaches us the danger of sounding a siren when little or no danger exists. After the passage of the tax cap in last year's legislative session and the continued fiscal crisis looming ahead in the next legislative session, I can think of no better time to send out an SOS to our employees and to our community. In this case, SOS translates to Save Our Schools!



As a result of the property tax cap legislation, the tax levy increase for 2012-2013 is limited to the lesser of 2% or the Consumer Price Index (CPI). CPI is a measure of the cost of living. If the proposed tax levy exceeds the tax levy limit, 60% or more of the votes on the proposed budget must be “yes.” In these difficult economic times, achieving a 60% “supermajority” would be difficult in Lindenhurst.

Please note that a budget that offers a tax levy increase within the guidelines of the tax cap still requires a majority (50% or more) vote. As in the past, the district is permitted to have a second budget vote if the first budget vote is defeated. If the second vote also fails, the tax levy increase must remain at zero. This differs from “the old days” when contingency limited expenditures but still allowed tax levy increases which were often close to the tax levy that a passed budget would have yielded. For example, in 2011-2012, the tax levy increase approved by the voters was 6.89%, while the contingency tax levy increase would have been 6.3%.

Recently, there has been a great deal of discussion about unfunded mandates. One of these mandates is the Triborough Amendment of the Taylor Law. This says that when contracts for unionized public employees run out and new ones aren't in place, employers cannot alter the terms and conditions of employment. This means, for example, that if a labor union had a contract in which employees had steps that increased annually, those step increases would continue even after the contract expired, until a new contract was negotiated.

As we take a preliminary look at next year's budget, it looks like estimated contractual increases including salaries, benefits, contributions to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and Employee Retirement System (ERS), and the loss of the Education Job Fund translate to an increase in expenditures of approximately \$4,567,843. If we subtract the allowable 2% tax cap of approximately \$1,736,195, we find ourselves with a deficit of \$2,831,648 (assuming state aid is flat). Clearly, the challenge is finding other cost savings measures in delivering instruction, managing operations, and through negotiations with our six bargaining units. The tax cap will remain in effect until at least 2016-2017 (5 years). Over the course of five years, the district could find it cannot meet its educational or financial obligations as we run through our fund balance and reserves.

Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* contains a chapter in which Tom was told to paint the fence, but instead he coerced all the kids in the neighborhood to do the work on his behalf. The Board of Education and I, like Tom Sawyer, have a choice... either to try to paint the fence by ourselves, or give the tools to our employees and community members to complete the job. We need our community members to support the budget and to advocate for more state aid, and we need our employees to work with us as we negotiate contracts that are realistic in light of our financial situation. We are definitely sending out an SOS. Help us Save Our Schools!

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Lindy Spotlight is the school district's community newsletter, containing pertinent information on the activities and issues of the district, published six times annually, and mailed free of charge to all district residents. The district reserves the right to publish information pertaining to students regarding school activities, academic honors, sports programs, scholarships, etc.

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The Lindenhurst School District hereby advises students, parents, employees, and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities, including vocational educational opportunities, without regard to gender, race, color, national origin or disability. Inquiries regarding this nondiscrimination policy may be directed to: Title IX Coordinator Anthony V. Amesti at 867-3090 and/or Section 504 Coordinator Louis J. Aiello at 867-3100 at the Central Administration Building, 350 Daniel Street, Lindenhurst, New York 11757.



HOMECOMING ILLUMINATES *Lindy Pride*



Lindy Pride was on full display in Lindenhurst for Homecoming 2011. The festivities began on the afternoon of Friday, October 21 with the middle school pep rally. Representatives from all sporting teams showed off their green and white as the bulldog mascot encouraged cheers from the crowd.

The festivities continued into the evening as the high school pep rally brought together all sports teams to display their spirit. Also represented were the marching band, dance teams, and cheer squads.

The annual homecoming parade was held the following day. The floats started at Fireman's Park, made their way down Wellwood Avenue, and ended at Lindenhurst Middle School. This year's colorful floats were designed around the theme of "Board Games."

Following the parade, the Lindenhurst Bulldogs put together one of the best games of the year to defeat the Sachem East Flaming Arrows with a score of 42-0. "The team played our most complete game of the year," said head coach Nick Lombardo. "The offense, defense, and special teams all came together."

The Bulldog victory culminated a great weekend of true Lindy Pride.

Spotlight on Achievement

JROTC Installs New Student Leader

Senior Marine Instructor Sergeant Major Frank W. Grotschel is pleased to announce that senior Kristen A. Stumpf was appointed to the position of Commanding Officer of the Lindenhurst High School Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) Unit. This year, the high school has more than 100 students participating in the program.

Kristen will be involved in all aspects of the operation, including personnel assignments, appointments, promotions, and disciplinary action.

"The appointment is the direct result of Kristen's demonstrated leadership ability, academic achievement, dedication, and growth potential," said Sergeant Grotschel. "She truly commands the respect of everyone she comes into contact with."



The JROTC class listens to Sergeant Frank Grotschel's proclamation announcement appointing Kristen Stumpf to the position of Commanding Officer.

Students Honored at "CHAMPIONS" BREAKFAST

The Breakfast for Champions honors those students who always try their best and go "above and beyond at Lindenhurst Middle School." Every month, selected students are honored for their achievements with a breakfast at the Lindencrest Diner. Students, parents, teachers and administrators enjoy a full breakfast to recognize those students nominated by their teachers.

"This breakfast honors the children that come into school each day and smile. It is for the students who do their homework, who listen. You are Lindy Pride!" exclaimed Lindenhurst Middle School Principal Frank Naccarato.

Congratulations to the November winners: Joe Angelini, Kathryn Byron, Robert Conti, Timothy Fleming, Caelyn Garbe, Emma Gillam, Mario Licari, Brooke Lynch, Johnathan Mencarelli, Kayla Rhodes, Sydney Schnaars, and Senna Tadfie.



Elementary Learning

A Mural with a Message



Allegheny Avenue Principal Laura Newman, social worker Florri Krefsky, art teacher Nicole Pappas, parent volunteers and students enjoyed making the handprint mural in the gymnasium.

Allegheny Avenue Elementary School students created a painted handprint mural on their gymnasium wall in celebration of Red Ribbon Week, a program that emphasizes making positive, healthy choices. "Being connected to each other and to our school helps us make the best choices," said social worker Florri Krefsky.

This year's theme was "Don't Monkey Around with Drugs." Various age-appropriate activities were held in the classrooms throughout the week. There were bookmark, sticker, and pencil giveaways, and the week ended with all the students and staff wearing red on Friday.

Red Ribbon Week is designated as a symbol of intolerance towards the use of drugs, as well as a symbol of support for children to reach their full potential by building strong character.

Character Education Kudos

Third-grade students at Daniel Street Elementary School conducted a special awards ceremony to promote character education. Prior to the celebration, each student picked the name of a fellow student and was assigned to "watch" that person and document something at which he or she excelled.

Students created special medals for their fellow students, explaining why they had given the award and filling in the blank for "I like the way you...." Responses included "read in our reading group," "are always so nice," "make people laugh," "listen to others," "help me," "pay attention," and "tell a story." The program was based on the book *Ronald Morgan Goes to Camp*, in which the main character, Ronald, is recognized by fellow campers for being a good friend.

Consultant teacher and program coordinator Kristen Moore said, "The students enjoyed presenting their fellow students with special awards." All of the third-grade classes worked together on this project. Thank you to third-grade teachers Alana Buffa, Heather Burgoyne, Donna Costello, and Elizabeth Junz.



DINOSAURS ROCK

Albany Avenue Elementary School students enjoyed a special enrichment presentation with Dinosaurs Rock, sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Association.

The hands-on lesson transformed the school gym into a museum of dinosaur fossils and prehistoric items, including dinosaur eggs and footprints. Students were able to see and touch minerals and bones.

Students also participated in a fossil dig and discovered dinosaur bones, shark teeth and petrified wood. As a reminder of their day, children were allowed to bring home their findings. "Everyone loved the interactive dinosaur exhibit!" remarked Principal Lisa Omeis.



Across The District

Education Week Welcomes Parents

Teachers and students at West Gates Elementary School welcomed parents into their classroom as part of American Education Week, an invitation that emphasized the importance of parental involvement in children's education.

Third-grade students participated in a range of lessons. Mrs. Ale's class furthered their classroom instruction by making a landfill with clay. Mr. Fiori's students took part in an educational game of "Jeopardy." With the show's theme music in the background, parents and students learned various facts in the categories "Parts of Speech," "Science," "Social Studies," "Math" and "School." Mrs. Ierardi's class enjoyed mathematical games in which parents and students competed against each other and worked together.

West Gates was just one of many elementary schools throughout the district that opened its doors to parents during American Education Week.



Education on Fire Safety

The North Lindenhurst Fire Department educated students at William Rall Elementary School on fire safety and demonstrated what should be done in case of a fire. Students attended a short assembly on the importance of smoke detectors and creating a family fire exit plan. After the assembly, students exited the building to the school parking lot, where a "smoke house" and large fire truck were waiting.

The smoke house is a trailer designed to show students what to do in a fire. Fake smoke, imitating a real fire, poured from the house. Students were shown how to drop to their knees, get to the nearest door, and exit promptly. Following this demonstration, they were given a detailed tour of the fire truck. Members of the fire department also explained what their different tools are used for.

"We truly appreciate the North Lindenhurst Fire Department volunteers who shared their knowledge to educate William Rall students," said Principal Patricia Castine. "The students especially enjoyed the smoke house trailer."

Readers Recognized

Harding Avenue Elementary School students who participated in Senator Owen Johnson's Summertime Reading program were rewarded with a lunch at Sorto's Top Bun on South Wellwood Avenue. This year, 43 students read three or more books and wrote summaries for each book. Readers were also given special certificates from Senator Johnson.

The students were congratulated by Senator Owen Johnson, Superintendent Richard Nathan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Personnel Dr. Robert Tymann, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services Louis Aiello, and Harding Principal Brian Chamberlin. The event was coordinated by reading specialists Maria Bohrer and Danielle Lazaro.

The students enjoyed discussing the books they read while eating a delicious lunch.





Helping Hands



Serving Up Spectacular Spooks

Children throughout Lindenhurst gathered at Lindenhurst High School for the annual Safe Halloween celebration. Sponsored and organized each year by the Student Council, the festivities provided a safe and fun environment for children to collect treats, play games, and enjoy the holiday.

Various clubs and student government organizations set up mazes and games for the younger children in different rooms at the high school. There was a dance with a DJ, a magician, and Halloween skits performed by drama students. Many students enjoyed dressing up and trick-or-treating in the halls of the high school.

“Safe Halloween was not only fun for the younger children, but a great experience for the high school students,” said Student Council co-advisors Heidi Campbell and Megan Scharf.



Celebrating Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Lindenhurst High School students, teachers, and administrators were encouraged to wear pink to school in celebration of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Among the many activities designed to draw awareness to and raise money for breast cancer research, the school held a bake sale and a gift basket raffle which raised more than \$1,500.

Students also participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer campaign, sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Through this campaign, teachers were encouraged to don pink apparel during school.

The “pinkest” teacher award went to band leader Kevin Pike. Thank you to the National Art Honor Society students and advisor Cecelia Mattera for coordinating the week-long programs.

A “Sweet” Donation

More than 65 students involved in the Family and Consumer Science (FACS) program at Lindenhurst Middle School coordinated the distribution of goody bags to OLPH Food Pantry and Grace’s Food Pantry, both in Lindenhurst, for FACS’s annual Halloween celebration.

“The food pantries were so happy to receive the sweets before Halloween,” said coordinator and middle school teacher Rosanne Giugliano.



WALK NOW FOR AUTISM

Congratulations to Lindenhurst High School students Daniel Cahill, Kaitlyn Cahill, Victoria Morreale and Lucas Walata for their participation in the Walk Now for Autism Speaks event at Jones Beach. Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disorder.



Lindenhurst High School Principal Daniel Giordano (left) with Autism Speaks walk participants (L-R) Victoria Morreale, Kaitlyn Cahill, Lucas Walata and Daniel Cahill.



Focus on The Arts



High School Music Honorees

NYSSMA

The Lindenhurst School District is proud to announce that Lindenhurst High School senior Hailey Berkowitz has been selected to perform in this year's New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Winter Conference choir. This is a tremendous honor, as this selection ranks Hailey among the top musicians statewide. In addition, two Lindenhurst High School students were selected as alternates, senior Naomi Asch and junior Doriann Lewis.

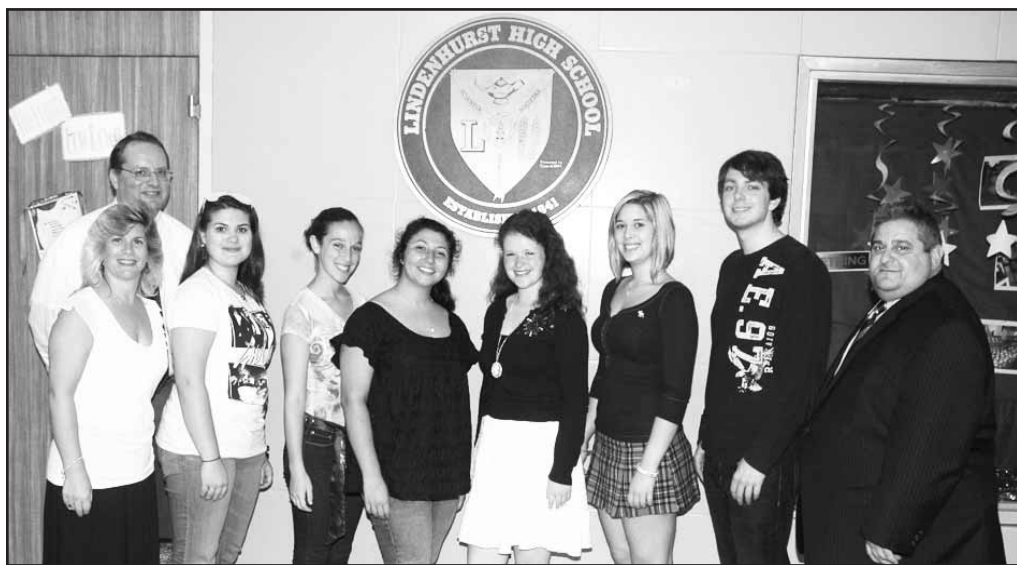
At this conference, students will rehearse and perform with the finest musicians across New York State under the direction of outstanding conductors from all over the country. Performances will be held at the Eastman Theater at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester.

NYSCAME/SCMEA

Six high school students were chosen to participate in the Mixed Chorus and Women's Chorus of the NYSCAME (New York State Council of Administrators of Music Education) and SCMEA (Suffolk County Music Educators' Association) All-County High School Festival which was held in November.

The selected students rehearsed and performed with the finest musicians from Suffolk County under the direction of Dr. Steven Ulrich, Professor of Music at Lehigh University, and Ms. Rebecca Reames, Associate Professor at SUNY Potsdam.

Congratulations to Hailey Berkowitz, Doriann Lewis, Naomi Asch, Josh Bodah, Abigail Gillam and Cassie Price.



Marching Band Hosts Field Band Competition

The Lindenhurst High School Marching Band hosted six schools for the New York State Field Band Conference Competition at Lindenhurst Middle School's athletic field. The other school districts that performed were Levittown, Sachem, Garden City, Copiague, Brentwood, and Arlington.

Lindenhurst's marching band, led by drum majors Naomi Asch and Ryan Young, impressed the audience with an entertaining performance entitled "Transcendent Journey." The color guard also gave a stellar performance. This year's drum majors were seniors Naomi Asch and Ryan Young.

The band, color guard, and dancers practiced for many hours over the summer for this competition. "The commitment and energy was outstanding," stated Band Director Kevin Pike. "We thank everyone for their support of the fine music program."



Fire Poster Honors



Daniel Street winners

Congratulations to this year's winners in the Fire Prevention Poster Contest sponsored by the Lindenhurst Fire Department.

Coordinated by Harry Prodromides, the annual contest invited all Lindenhurst School District elementary students to participate. Students were asked to either color or draw a picture based on the theme of fire safety. Submissions were then judged and five winners (one per grade) from each school were chosen. To recognize these winners, the Lindenhurst Fire Department traveled to each school with a fire truck and presented the winning artists with certificates of achievement.

Also, congratulations to Daniel Street Elementary School for winning the "most efficient" fire drills.

WILLIAM RALL: Christopher Morris, Oeksandra Blyshchaki, Lauren Barbaro, Kathleen Mackey, and Julia DiOrio.

DANIEL STREET: Abhijeet Khirdekar, Liam Jordon, Johnathan Sielinski, David Rodrigues, and Leela Bautista.

ALLEGHANY AVENUE: Olivia Rossi, Jessica Bryant, Joselyn Osario, Aiden Gill, and Kasper Domanski.

HARDING AVENUE: Heather Neumar, Anthony Maccarone, Patrick Lopez, Adem Akyasar, and Daria Majkrzak.

WEST GATES AVENUE: Ewa Paszek, Samantha Salvia, Kayla Simon, Sandra Gandy, and Katlynn Reed.

ALBANY AVENUE: Jessica Orzelowski, Matthew Clark, Savannah McGhee, Sara Joblonski, and Lily Barbara.

Fall Sports in Review

Football

The Lindenhurst High School football team ended the season with a 5-3 record. While they were eliminated in the first round of the playoffs, Coach Nick Lombardo remarked "The Bulldogs never quit!" The team has almost two dozen seniors graduating in June.

Girls Volleyball

The girl's varsity volleyball team defeated Newfield and Ward Melville to advance to the Suffolk County Championship Game against Smithtown East. While they were defeated in the championship game, the team exceeded their season goals. They had an awesome season, defeating top ranked teams. "This year's team was extremely dedicated, and they gave it their all for every match and game," said coach Kellie Block. "Not only do they work together as a team, but they bond together like a family."

Boys Volleyball

The varsity boys volleyball team entered the playoffs with high expectations. The team was the top seeded team in Suffolk County and had a first round bye. They defeated Bay Shore to advance to the Suffolk County Championship and they beat Northport to win the Class A Suffolk County Championship Game. While they lost to the Massapequa Chiefs in

the Long Island Championship game, their season is to be commended.

Swimming and Diving

The Lindenhurst Bulldogs competed at the League Championship in November at Sachem North.

Cross Country

The Lindenhurst High School boys and girls cross country teams competed in the Section XI Championships and State Qualifying meet at Sunken Meadow. They also won the 39th annual Babylon Bowl at Belmont State Park.

Field Hockey

The Lindenhurst High School varsity field hockey team finished the season with a 9-7 record. They won their first playoff game by defeating Huntington. They lost in the Suffolk County quarterfinals 2-0 against Sachem East.

Gymnastics

The Lindenhurst High School varsity girls gymnastics team was crowned league champions.

Cheerleaders

The Lindenhurst High School varsity cheerleaders won the UCA Northeast Regional Tournament to qualify to compete in the national tournament in Disney World.



*Congratulations
to the Varsity
Boys Volleyball
Team on their Suffolk
County Championship*




Girls Volleyball Digs Pink

The Lindenhurst High School Varsity Girls Volleyball team, dressed in pink and black in support of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, won the sixth annual Side-Out Foundation's Dig Pink tournament. Sixteen teams participated in the day-long event at the district's high school and middle school. Long and short-sleeved T-shirts were sold to help raise money for the Foundation.



The Lindenhurst High School Varsity Girls Volleyball team was the winner of the Dig Pink Tournament.