

The Hagedorn Little Village School *Jack Joel Center for Special Children*



May 2019 Newsletter

Parent Association Fashion Show

Thank you to our Fashion Show Chairpersons **Melissa Flick, Kristin Maisano and Amanda Varelakis** for coordinating another wonderful evening. The runway was filled with many of our children and staff as they wore fun fashions from the decades! A very special thank you to our many wonderful sponsors and supporters, including our *Hustle Sponsors*, **Nick and Amanda Varelakis!**



Our Awesome Parents.....and our Stunning Staff Models....



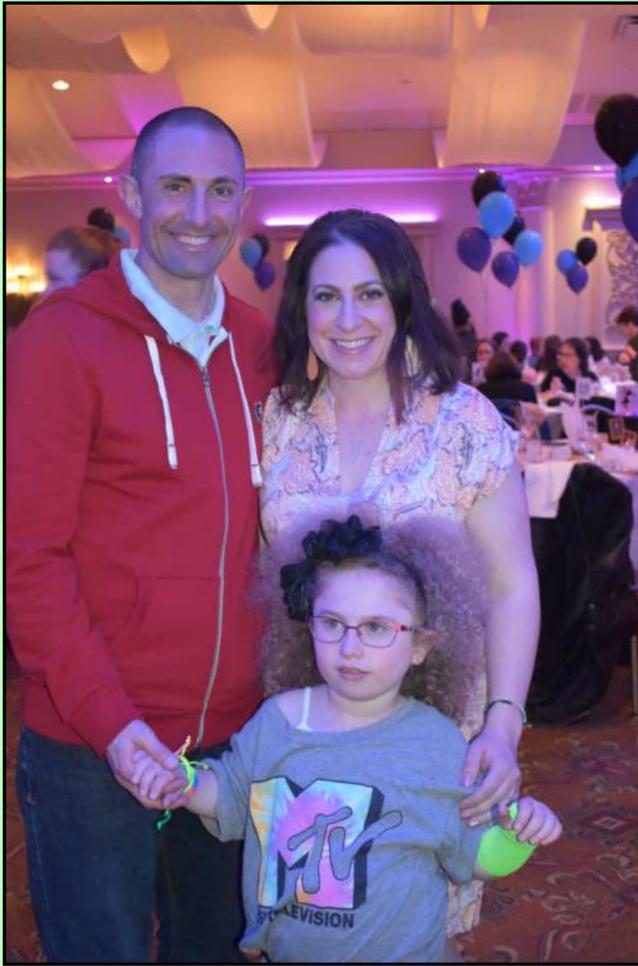
★
*...and
Our
Star
Models!*
★



*Parent
Association
Fashion
Show*

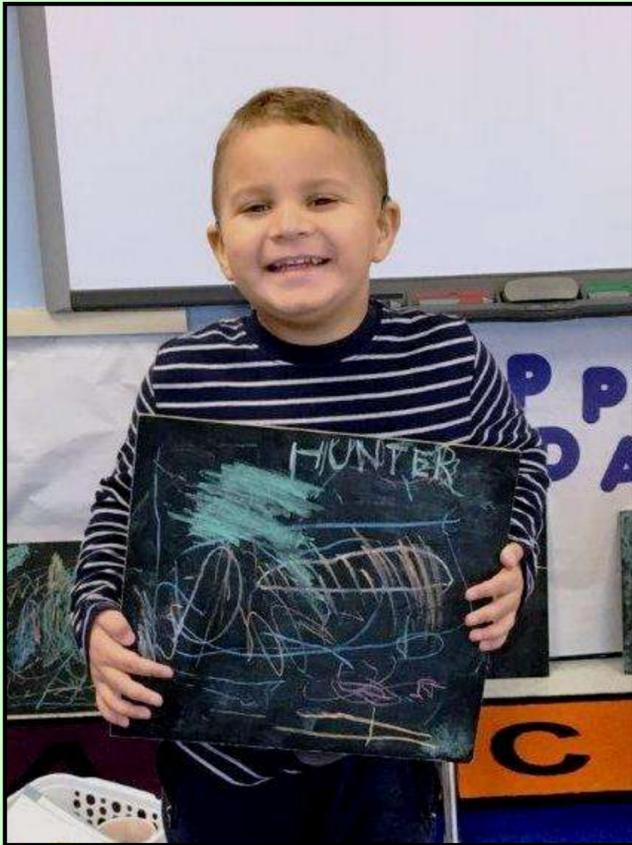


Parent Association Fashion Show



Student Spotlight - Hunter White

Hunter White began attending The Hagedorn Little Village School in the Early Intervention Program and is now graduating from our Preschool program and is ready to take on Kindergarten in his home town.



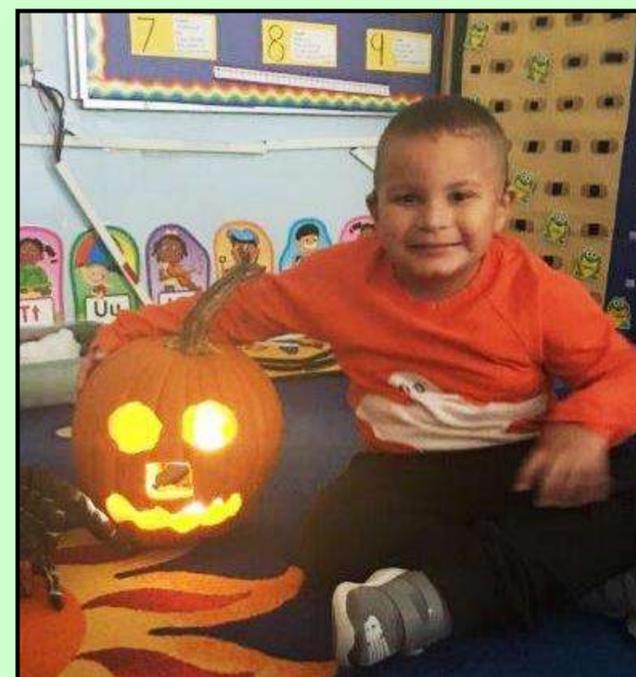
Hunter's mom is so proud of him and believes he has accomplished so much since his arrival at Little Village. When asked what Hunter's biggest achievement has been his mom said it was his speech. "He was not speaking upon entering Little Village and used an iPad program for his language to communicate on his own." She is so please with his progress.



At home and in his preschool classroom, Room 13, Hunter has so much to share each day with his family, friends, teachers and therapists. He is always telling us about past events and reminding us of what we still need to do each day. Hunter has also happily shared with us that he will become a big brother in June!

Hunter's teacher, **Miss Mary Beth**, believes he has so many great qualities. He loves playing with all his classmates and will always make sure any friend who is interested in playing with him is included and gets a turn. Hunter loves and is a superstar at counting, identifying his numbers and making patterns. Hunter has great dance moves too!

We wish Hunter well upon graduating and moving onto kindergarten and on becoming a big brother!



Room 6pm Celebrating Spring!

Teacher **Denise Zahakos** and the children in Room 6pm have been learning about spring and caring for the earth. The class honed their fine motor skills and enjoyed making Cheerio and pipe cleaner bird feeders (although more were probably eaten by the children).

During a nature walk, we hung our bird feeders on the bushes outside. Everyone had a great time. *Welcome Spring!*



2019 Golf Outing June 3, 2019

Register online at www.littlevillage.org

Foursomes and Sponsorships Still Available!!

Contact Jennifer Kirincic
516-520-6043 or
Jennifer.kirincic@littlevillage.org
For more information

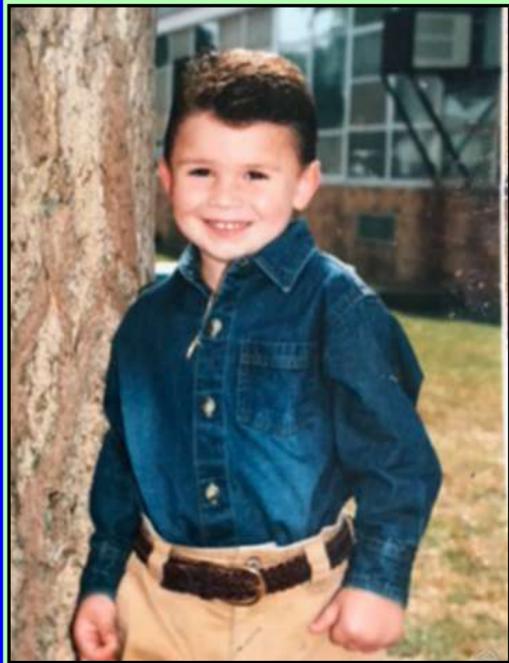


Pine Hollow
Country Club



Alumni News - Blake McKenna

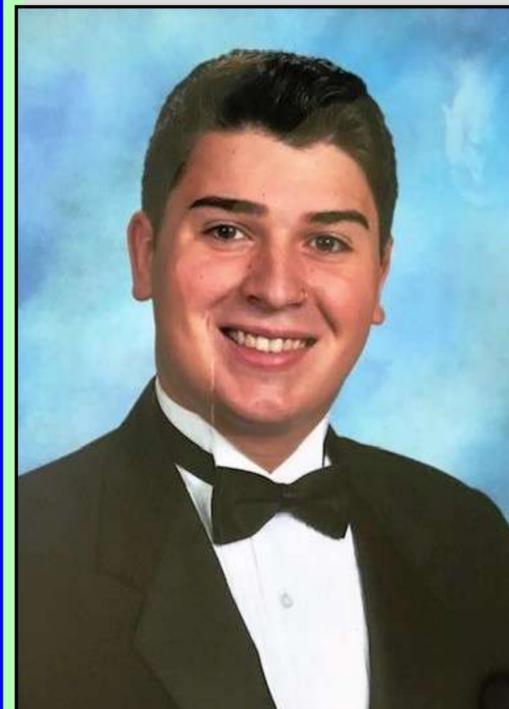
Blake McKenna was diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. He received intense ABA services 5 days a week and began his journey here at Little Village School in 2004. While his college essay explains his journey best, Blake's proud mom offers these words of advice, "I can't stress enough to never lose faith and to never lose sight of the beauty they already possess. Hardships often prepare our otherwise 'ordinary' children for extraordinary destiny. After all, why fit in if you were born to stand out?" ~*Melissa (McKenna) Monaco*



"Everyone has a mountain to climb and autism has not been my mountain, it has been my opportunity for victory" (Rachel Barcellona). When I think back to when my story began, it is with vague memory I see myself holding hands with my mom walking down the halls of The Hagedorn Little Village School for Special Needs Children. While my mother spent many sleepless nights worrying and cried many tears, my memories during this time were that of a little boy running, laughing, and playing as if I didn't have a care in the world. In 2004, I was diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

During my elementary schools years, I started off in a self-contained classroom. Although I knew I was learning at a slower pace, something inside of me told me I didn't fit in here. My voice was not heard at this time, as I was too young to speak for myself. As the years progressed, I slowly emerged from the self-contained setting, and placed into ICT classes. I thoroughly enjoyed my elementary school years. It was never my peers that made me feel out casted, it was the system itself.

I have memories running through the hallways to get to my resource room hoping that no one would see me. During lessons, I would be one of five students separated from the rest of the class sitting on the carpet with another teacher. I never felt different from my peers, but this placement defined me as "different."



Let's fast forward to my high school years. These are the years that I made profound academic strides. As I still carry an IEP, my ICT classes have been removed, and I am currently taking AP and College level classes. In addition, that boy once sitting in the self-contained classroom was now sitting in the auditorium being inducted into both the class of 2019 Scholar and Art National Honor Societies. The only support I am provided with now is resource room, which I am grateful for the support where I see fit. I deeply appreciate that during the high school years I have been allowed to participate and contribute to my IEP meetings. My voice is heard!

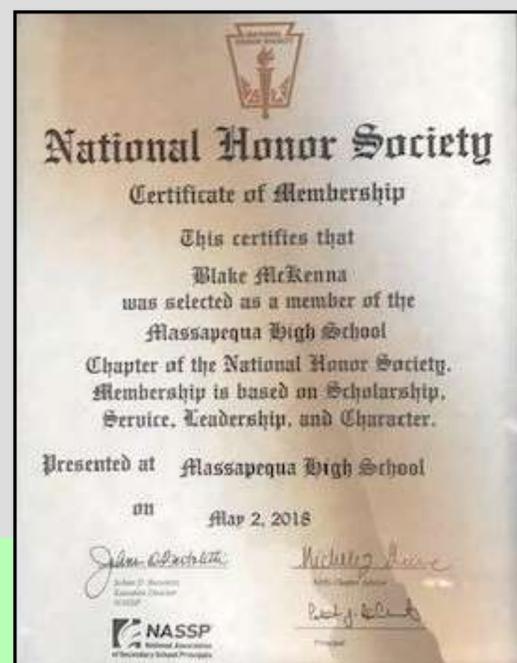
Through my academic journey, not only have I accepted and taken pride in my diagnosis, I have also found myself along the way. No longer am I embarrassed of my disorder, and along with acceptance of my autism, I have also found acceptance in myself as a gay man. Coming out to my family and friends and being comfortable in my own skin has had great impact on my academic progress. Slowly but surely everything seemed to make sense and fall into place for me. The

embarrassment diminished, I am proud to be me.



Reflecting back on my formative years, my mother's tears have turned to tears of joy. She is so proud that I was able to overcome every obstacle she feared would stop me from reaching college level education. Being that I have proven to myself that I am capable of so much more than I originally thought, I am looking forward, with great excitement, to the challenges that higher education has to offer. My struggles do not define me, they empower and motivate me to do better every single day. I may have not known it then, but it is with confidence that I can say that Autism has never been my mountain, it has been my road to success.

We are incredibly proud of Blake and his accomplishments and wish him nothing but the best in what appears to be a very bright future!



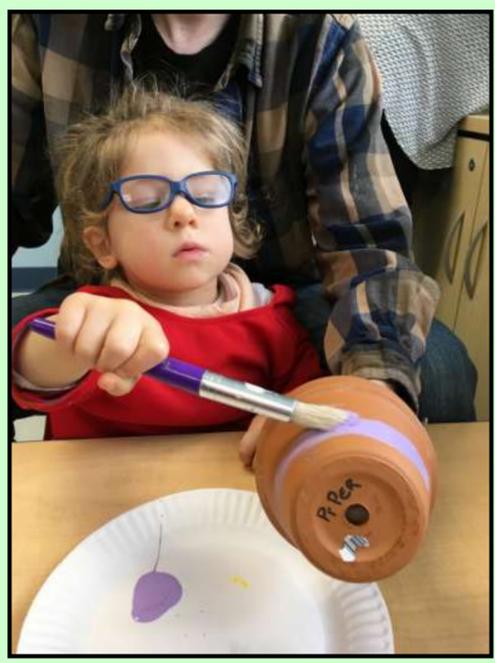
MacArthur High School LAX 4 Autism

The **MacArthur High School Generals Lacrosse Team** held their 7th Annual “LAX 4 AUTISM” day at MacArthur High School on Saturday, April 27th. The day included the Girls Varsity playing at 9am followed by Levittown Tomahawks games played all day long on three fields! They held a Special Needs clinic at 12pm and their Boys Junior Varsity and Varsity played at 4:30pm and 7pm. All proceeds from this event will go to support Little Village!

Thank you to the school, the school’s administration, all the teams that participated and to **John Nessler** and **Vin Causeman** for continuously supporting Little Village. We are humbled by your caring and generosity and can’t begin to thank you all enough!



Room 223 is Busy Creating Special Gifts for our Special Moms!



Room 81am Learning About Tools and Community Helpers

This month, Teacher **Margaret Porcelli** and the children in Room 81am learned all about tools. They used the knowledge they had from their Unit on Community Helpers to discuss the tools community helpers use and their purpose. They spent some time using these tools to measure different items — including their friends in class! They also constructed their own towns including buildings, apartments and houses. The students enjoyed this unit very much and even got time outside in the warmer weather to apply what they learned.



Babysitting Night

On Friday night May 10th, Little Village hosted another Babysitting Night for our students and their families. We do this to give our parents couple of hours of free time while their children have fun and play at school! Thanks to all of our many staff members, volunteers, family members and friends. In addition, thanks to student volunteers from **St. Johns University** as well as Occupational Therapy students from **Stony Brook University** for volunteering their time and giving our families a well deserved night out!



Babysitting Night



Don't forget to follow us on Instagram and Facebook!

