

**A
History
Of
Meadow Pond
Elementary
School
1967-2017**

**Compiled by
Priscilla Luckow
2017**

Throughout the 19th century, one-room schoolhouses were scattered throughout Northern Westchester. The cost of education was covered by leftover funds from the dog tax and the poor tax. In 1836, John Lewis donated \$10,000 to the local schools in return for having the town named after himself.



The Vista Schoolhouse (Courtesy of M. Koehl) (1)

In 1939, construction began on the new South Salem School (later called Lewisboro Elementary School) at a cost of \$150,000. The new school was centrally located within the town of Lewisboro. Five separate districts (schoolhouses) in Lewisboro were combined to form Unified School District #1 which housed 140 students in grades 1-8, five teachers and the Principal, Robert Stewart. The first classes were held in December 1940.

Conferences with representatives of the other one-room schoolhouse districts in this town disclose the following pupil load:

<u>District</u>	<u>Approx. present roll</u>	<u>Approx. theoret. capac.</u>
1 - Vista	33	22
2 - Lewisboro	27	15*
3 - South Salem lower	26	25
4 - Lake Waccabue	10	25**
6 - Cross River	27	30
7 - South Salem upper	<u>27</u>	<u>20</u>
	150	137

* Present building closed. Children sent to Ridgefield.
 ** Figured on single seats. Present double benches obsolete.

District 4 Committee Report (2)



Lewisboro Elementary School circa 1941 (2)

September 1945 – Kindergarten classes were added to Lewisboro Elementary School and the Katonah School.

September 23, 1952 – Residents of Katonah and Lewisboro voted to merge the two school districts. The Katonah-Lewisboro School District became official as of September 30, 1952. The new District Principal was Charles T. Helmes. (PT 1-10-60) All children in Lewisboro were sent to the Katonah School for grades 9 to 12.



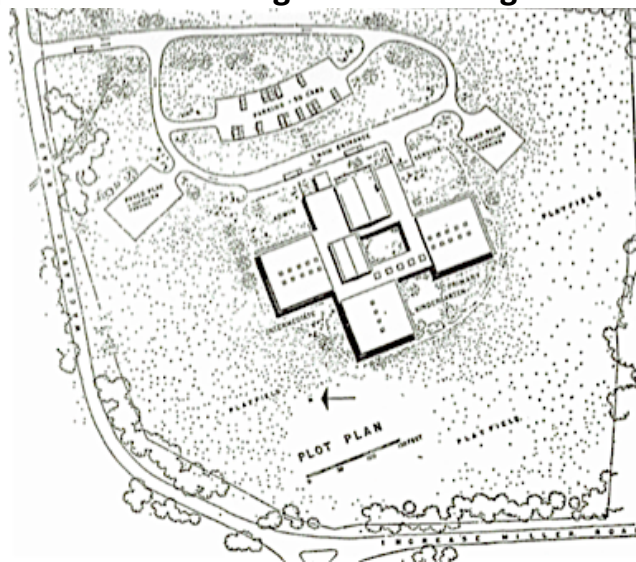
Charles T. Helmes



Katonah School (Grades 9-12 on the top floor)

May 3, 1961 – Voters approved the purchase of two elementary school building sites: 14 acres in Goldens Bridge on Rt. 138 and Increase Miller Rd. and 12 acres on Rt. 123 north of Shady Lane. The two proposed elementary schools were deemed necessary due to ever-increasing enrollment projections. The plan was for Increase Miller Elementary School (IMES) to open in September 1962 and for the other school (Meadow Pond) to open two years later. (PT 5-11-61)

February 1962 –Construction began on IMES. The school was heralded as having “mid-century architectural flair. Light, airy and flexible...a distinct departure from the massive exterior, the echoing corridor of bygone days.” (PT 1-19-64) IMES opened in September 1963 for grades K through 6.



IMES Architectural Plan (PT 1-21-62)

June 1963 – Mr. and Mrs. Jerome A. Newman donated their summer home, Meadowpond, and three acres of property to the KLSD. The home in Vista was adjacent to the 12 acres of property purchased in 1961 by the district for a new elementary school. Meadowpond served as the District Office for many years.



Patent Trader October 10, 1963



Old Water Pump at Meadowpond

The new school was named “Meadow Pond Elementary School” (MPES) in honor of the gift from the Newman Family. “Meadow Pond” is the name of a small pond across the street from the D.O. It is visible from Kitchawan Rd. The property was originally part of the Ferris Homestead established around 1782. Indian corn, oats, rye, apples and potatoes were grown on the homestead. (2)

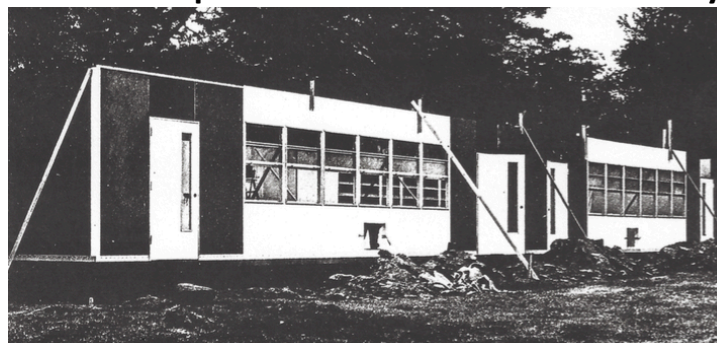


1862 Survey with Meadow Pond and the Ferris “dwelling.”



Meadow Pond today from Kitchawan Rd

August 1965 – Two portable classrooms for kindergarten were placed on the Meadowpond site to relieve pressure at Lewisboro Elementary School. (PT 9-5-65)

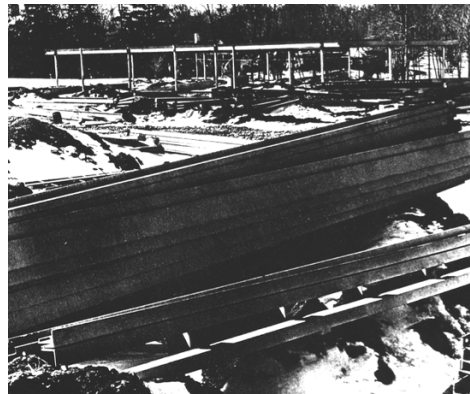


The BOE asked the architects of the Increase Miller School to design an almost identical school but one adapted to the Meadow Pond site. The design was for a classroom capacity of 450 students with six additional classrooms to be added later to achieve a maximum capacity of 600 students. (PT 8-15-65)

October 1966 – A. Stephen Plevka, 6th grade teacher at Increase Miller, was appointed Principal of Meadow Pond effective July 1, 1967. He prepared for his new position by becoming an administrative assistant to Principal Donald Farrington at Increase Miller for the rest of the school year in addition to his teaching duties. Construction began on the Meadow Pond school. (PT 10-20-66)

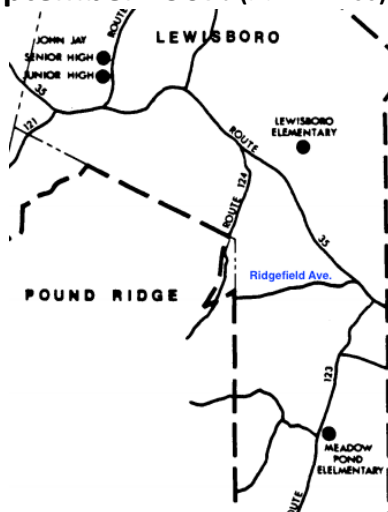


Principal A. Stephen Plevka



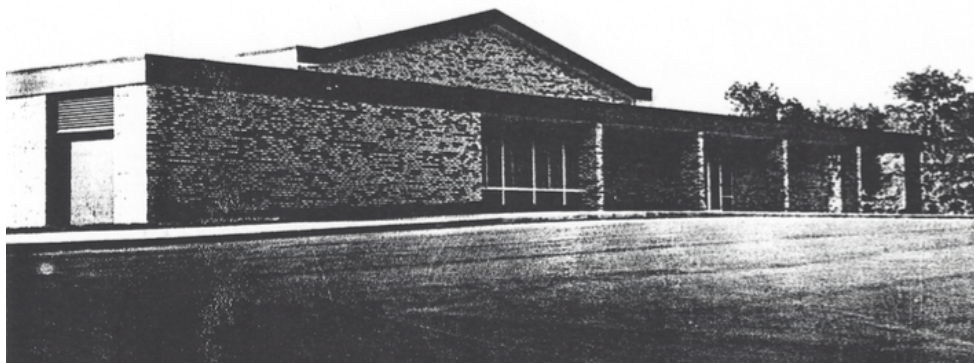
April 1967 Construction at MPES (PT 4-2-67)

December 1966 – BOE discussions began on how to redistrict students to the new Meadow Pond School from Lewisboro Elementary. The line was planned to be near Ridgfield Avenue, so that approximately 350 students would be attending each school in September 1967. (PT 12-11-66)

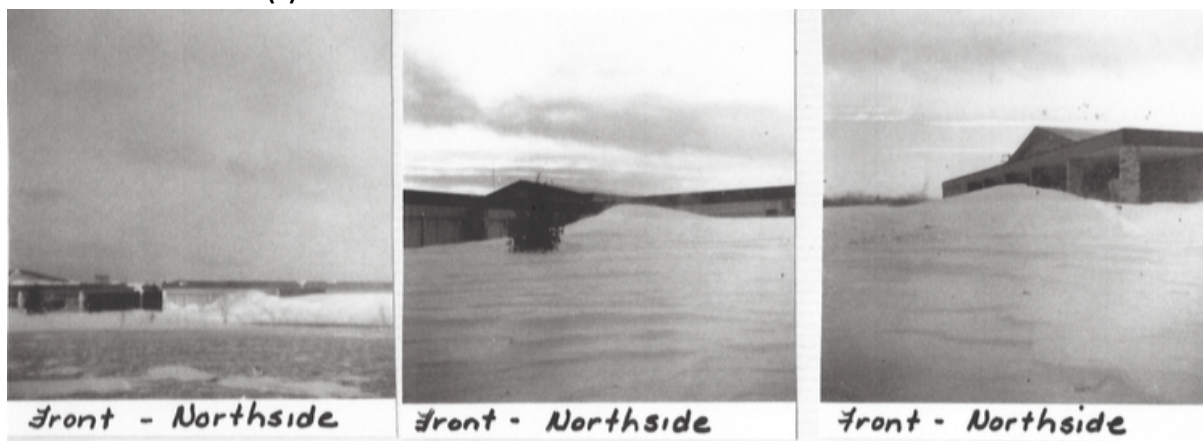


September 1967 – The opening of Meadow Pond was delayed due to several factors, largely electrical work. The children were temporarily split between LES and IMES. The students had classes in the hallways and worked out of boxes. Delays continued throughout October and November. (3)

December 4, 1967 – Opening Day of the new Meadow Pond Elementary School. There was still more to be done, but everyone was happy to be in a new building. The gym and cafeteria were not completed, so gym classes were held in the wings and lunch was eaten in the classrooms. The cafeteria only sold milk, no hot lunches. There was no playground yet. Children loved to play dodgeball and kickball at recess. They played in the side parking lot and often the ball would roll onto the road because there was not yet a fence. There was no Art Room. The art teacher, Mrs. Hansen, visited each classroom with her Art Cart to teach. The school nurse, Mrs. Kaupe, was shared with Lewisboro Elementary. There were two half-day kindergarten classes. One had 33 children and the other had 31 children. There were no kindergarten assistants. Meadow Pond was a K-6th grade school. Bob Goff was the school's first custodian. (3)



Winter 1968- There was a huge snowstorm and the drifts reached up to the roof of the new MPES. (4)



September 1968 – Meadow Pond construction and landscaping were finally completed. Enrollment was 425 at MPES, 415 at LES, 445 at IMES and 530 at KES. Mr. and Mrs. Roger Stone were Co-Presidents of the first MPES PTA. A jelly jar of student's names was buried near new pine trees planted (with help from the students) next to the school's driveway. (3)

1969-1970 – Meadow Pond’s first vegetable garden was dug and planted by the 5th and 6th graders at the back of the field near the modular classrooms. (4)



May 20, 1976 – Meadow Pond School celebrated America’s Bicentennial. The entire school wore colonial clothing, thanks to the PTA, and enjoyed early American music sung by the chorus. Displays of colonial cooking and wares were set up throughout the school, along with maps and crafts. A full year of bicentennial-related activities and research led up to this special day. (LL 5-18-76)

1981 - The school celebrated the Town of Lewisboro’s 250th birthday (1731). A week-long celebration was held at the school. The PTA President was Charlene Batchelor (Jackie Kovatch’s mother). Many events were organized by the PTA including weaving demonstrations, a giant Lewisboro cake, a concert, a 4th grade minuet and the screening of a movie depicting the town’s history as seen through the eyes of a mouse. (LL 4-81)



**6th Grader Jackie (Batchelor) Kovatch
Teacher Pete Heisen**



Teacher Kathy Lauterbach and Principal Steve Plevka

1984-1985 – Wooden playground equipment was installed outside of C-Wing at MPES for the first time. (3)

1987-1988 – MPES Principal Stephen Plevka was killed in July 1987 while in Vermont with his family. He had been Principal at the school for twenty years, since its opening in 1967. He was well-loved by all and dedicated to the students, the district and the community. Students planted bulbs in the garden outside the office window and placed a plaque in his memory.



July 1988 – Jack Boyle was named the second Principal of MPES. He remained at Meadow Pond for the next ten years. “Under Jack we built a greenhouse and community garden, started the first school TV Studio, painted the mural on the cafeteria wall, got new playground equipment, went on 3-day whale watch trips, started a Parents as Reading Partners Program, developed a Publishing Center, created a Computer Lab, revitalized our literacy program, developed a Music program where every child was expected to take part in at least one stage performance a year and became the first school to integrate special ed students into regular ed.” (Kathy Lauterbach)



Principal Jack Boyle

1989 – The 9th grade was moved from JJJHS to JJHS and the 6th grades from LES, IMES, MPES and KES were added to the Junior High. The name of that school was changed from John Jay Junior High School to John Jay Middle School. All elementary schools in the district were now K-5 schools.

December 4th, 1992 – MPES celebrated its 25th anniversary with a full day and evening of activities. The entire school was decorated and the 5th graders gave tours of the school. Everyone participated in the event.



A birthday cake with 25 “Candles” at the 25th Anniversary Assembly

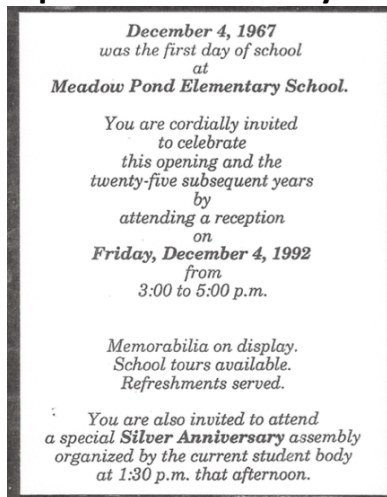
A Blue Spruce was planted on the island in front of the school so that it would be visible to all students as they entered and exited the school. Each student and faculty member donated \$.25 to buy the tree. “It symbolizes that all the faculty and students contributed to give a lasting gift to the school.” (Kathy Lauterbach) “This living memory marks the end of the first quarter century and the beginning of the next.” (3) (Unfortunately, a storm damaged the Blue Spruce @2015 and it had to be taken down).



Long-time MPES teachers helped to plant the Blue Spruce (4)

Mr. Scalzo, Mrs. Stuff, Mr. Heisen, Mr. Baker, Mrs. Armstrong, Mrs. Ticknor, Mrs. Pavlak

A 25th Anniversary assembly was held in the afternoon. After school, an old-fashioned birthday party complete with birthday cake and games was held. (3)



The School Song, written by MPES parents Fred and Katie Stark, was sung for the first time at the 25th Anniversary assembly that afternoon:

Meadow Pond Spirit

*These are the times
we will always remember
With tomorrow's hope in our eyes.*

*Every day we share,
brings us closer together.
Watch us as we reach for the sky...*

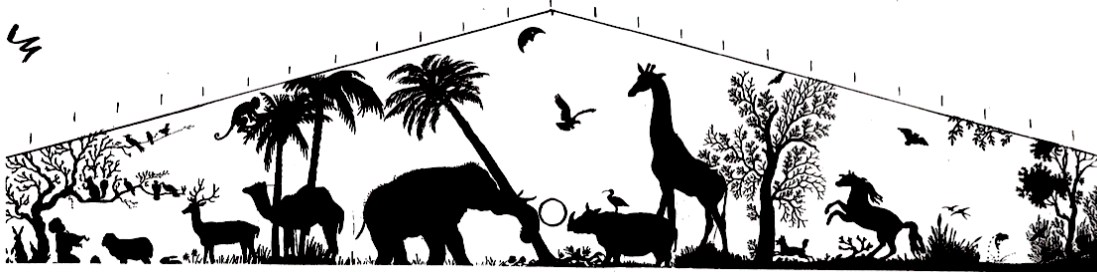
*We've got the Spirit.
Meadow Pond Spirit.
Sing it loud and clear.
Stand up tall and cheer.
Hey can't you hear it,
That Meadow Pond spirit?
We're the winning team
at Meadow Pond*

**MEADOW POND
YEAH!**



Melissa Richardson leading the new School Song assisted by Fred Stark (4)

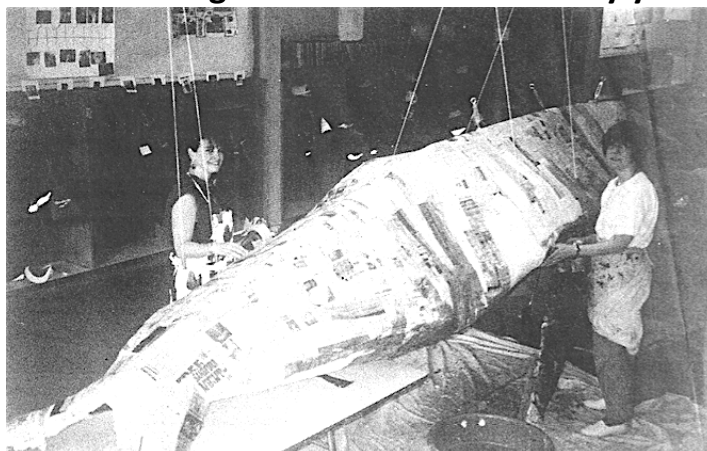
1993 – MPES parents and artists, Deborah and Bruce Michel designed the cafetorium mural using suggestions gathered from the students. They also designed and painted the “Kindness Tree” in the cafetorium. A projector displayed the design on the wall and the mural was painted over winter break by a group of parents and staff. The animal design was selected because of the students’ great interest in wildlife. If you look at the far-left side of the mural, you will see that the painting was never quite finished! (4)



September 1993 – Principal Boyle greeted children on the first day of school under Meadow Pond’s now traditional balloon arch. (4)



June 1994 – The 5th grade students worked with kindergartners to build a 22-foot model of a humpback whale. The PTA and Head Custodian Ken Bell were important participants in the whale design and construction process. The whale was suspended from the ceiling of the cafeteria for many years.

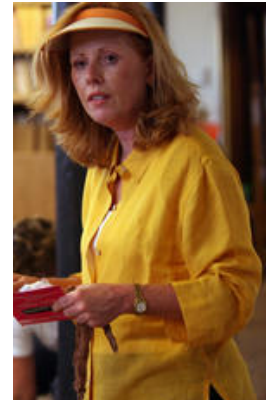


Kindergarten Assistant Charlene Batchelor and parents assisted with the whale. (LL 6-16-94)

1995/1996– A “Life Sciences Learning Lab” (greenhouse) was built outside of a 5th grade classroom at MPES along with an outdoor garden. The project was led by fifth grade teacher Denise Martabano. (4)



Principal Boyle and Melissa Richardson cheer on some garden diggers.



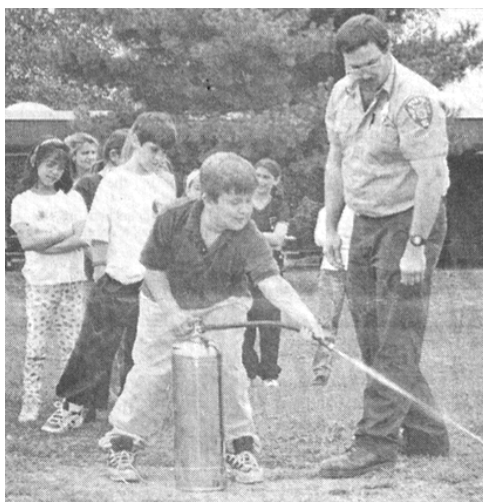
Denise Martabano

November 1995 – a \$44 million bond was passed allowing extensive renovations and additions at all schools in the district. Meadow Pond received a new library space, classrooms, computer lab and gym annex.



New gym under construction (4)

1997 – Tom Ritchie (aka Fireman Tom) returned to MPES for Fire Safety Week. Tom was a kindergartner at Meadow Pond soon after it opened and still returns every year with other Vista Fire Department members to teach fire safety.

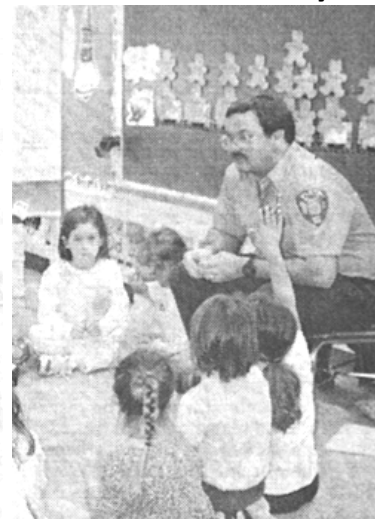


Rav Jones photo

Prevention

In honor of Fire Prevention Week, Tom Ritchey, district manager of the Vista Fire Department, recently paid a visit to his alumnus, Meadow Pond Elementary School.

Each year Mr. Ritchey gives a lecture to each class and gives out stickers and coloring books with fire safety themes. For the older students he also allows for some hands-on experience with a fire extinguisher.



Lewisboro Ledger October 1997

1998 - Sal Sclafani was named the third Principal of Meadow Pond. He introduced Max, our school mascot, Town Meetings, and in 2006, the first Community Day. Sal remained at MPES until retiring from the school district in 2007. (4)



Principal Sal Sclafani

June 2002 – a \$28.3 million bond was approved. The bond included an addition at Meadow Pond housing a general classroom, a conference room and an art/music room. The construction was completed in 2005. (JN 8-26-05)



2003-present - A colonial encampment for fourth graders was held at MPES as a “Living History” event. The field was transformed into an American Revolutionary War encampment complete with uniforms, muskets, forts, colonial games and cooking. Colonial study at MPES has evolved over the years and the simulation of life during the American Revolution and the “Review of the Troops” with Mr. Pardo has now become a long-standing tradition. (JN 7-8-04)



4th Graders Marching in their Colonial Uniforms (LL 6-05) The teachers also participate in the Encampment!

2005-2006 Town Meetings were introduced at MPES and Max the Moose was elected as the school mascot. “The kids voted for a mascot from a choice of five. We had election booths on the stage. At the time, we had a “Be Your Best” theme and the adults thought a Bumble Bee would be a good mascot. Guess what – kids hate bumble bees!!! Thank goodness, they knew better. Max became our beloved mascot because of that election.” (Kathy Lauterbach)



Max reading for PARP



Joanne Lewis and Max



Max in Festive Attire

May 2006 – the “Learning and Growing Garden Project” at MPES was launched. Parents helped to build a customized 30 foot by 40-foot vegetable garden structure and teacher Jason Briggs custom-built the raised garden beds. The project was spearheaded by teacher Denise Martabano.



Enclosed Garden and Raised Beds



Jason Briggs

An annual Planting Day, Harvest Day, Soup Day and Salad Day became traditions at MPES allowing students to enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor thanks to Denise Martabano, Keli Mazzoni and Jackie Kovatch.



Harvesting for Salad Day (BKP Oct. 2015)



Keli Mazzoni and Jackie Kovatch

July 2007 – Sal Sclafani retired as Principal of MPES. A “Salabration” and farewell was held at an outdoor luncheon. Tables were set up on the field and the entire school sat down to eat together. The students and staff dressed in bright colors and had an aerial photo taken which still hangs in the front hallway of the school. A bench and small tree were dedicated in Sal’s honor by the MPES patio and garden. Carolann Castellano was named the fourth Principal of Meadow Pond. Terry Costin served as Assistant Principal.



Salabration



Terry Costin and Carolann Castellano

2010 - Dawn Pomeroy was named Teacher on Special Assignment and then Assistant Principal at MPES. She had been a Spanish teacher at JJMS. (4)



The “Kindness Club” was formed by Jane Corace and Joanne Lewis to teach the children of MPES how they could make a change in the world. A mitten tree, holiday gifts, pajamas for less fortunate children and care packages for those serving in the military are among their annual projects. Dorothy O’Brien has led the club in recent years with help from other kind-hearted staff members.



Joanne Lewis and Jane Corace



Dorothy O'Brien on Pajama Day

2012 – The Compact team, student leadership and Character Education worked together to encourage the spirit of “Community” at MPES. Spearheaded by teacher Jason Briggs, street signs, stop and yield signs and “billboards” were put up in the hallways. Lines down the middle of the halls transformed the hallways into streets and streets into neighborhoods. Our monthly “Town Meetings” bring all of Meadow Pond’s neighborhoods together as one community. (4)



June 2012 - Kathy Lauterbach retired from the Katonah-Lewisboro School District. She started at LES for 7 years as a 5th grade teacher, then came to Meadow Pond where she served as a 5th Grade Teacher, Reading Teacher and Library Specialist under all four Principals of the school. She led many important committees and events throughout her tenure in the KLSD. (4)



June 2014 – Lewisboro Elementary School was closed due to a steady decline in enrollment. LES children were sent to MPES and IMES, and some IMES children were moved to KES. Many transition activities were held during the year including a “We are KLSD” video and tour by the school mascots.



The school mascots visited the schools to help with the transition. Max the Moose from MPES, Eddie the Eagle from IMES and Les the Leopard from LES toured at MPES, IMES and LES.

2015 – Full-day kindergarten was introduced throughout the school district with the savings realized from the closing of LES.

The Character Education Committee introduced the role of 5th Grade Ambassadors at MPES. The students selected for these positions consistently model the school themes of kindness, respect, responsibility and safe behavior. They also play a large role at Town Meetings. Mrs. Signore, Mrs. Milone, Dr. Monasch, Mrs. Marcoux and Mrs. Pomeroy organize many activities with the ambassadors to help instill character education into the fabric of MPES.



Mrs. Milone practicing for a skit



Mrs. Richardson and Mrs. Marcoux at a Town Meeting



Dr. Monasch

March 2017 – A “rejuvenation” of MPES included new cork-boards, a sportsmanship wall, posters and colorful prints throughout the school. The MPES themes “Be Kind. Be Respectful. Be Responsible. Be Safe.” were installed on the glass doors outside the cafeteria and on banners in front of the school. Special thanks to KLSD O&M, the MPES PTA, the K-L Foundation, Chris Mellon, (the school’s 3rd Head Custodian since 1967), Teaching Assistant Patty Trapasso and Dawn Pomeroy, who led the committee.



December 4, 2017 – a 50th birthday party for MPES will be held at Meadow Pond. The entire school as well as former teachers, staff and administrators will celebrate with games, decorations, an all-school assembly and of course, a birthday cake!

During the 2017-18 school year, the students will design a mosaic and then participate in the creation of the mosaic with Artist-in-Residence Cynthia Fisher in April. This mosaic will serve as the birthday gift to the school.

Happy 50th Birthday Meadow Pond Elementary School!!



Meadow Pond Elementary School



Katonah-Lewisboro School District
185 Smith Ridge Road
South Salem, New York 10590
Website: www.klschools.org/
Phone: 914-763-7900 Fax: 914-763-7986

Carolann Castellano, Principal

Dawn Pomeroy, Assistant Principal

December 4, 2017

Dear Meadow Pond School Community,

Since July of 2007, I have had the privilege of being the principal of the Meadow Pond Elementary School. From the very first moment, I realized that the students, staff, parents and community members are an extraordinary group of people. Their love and respect for each other and for their school is palpable as you walk through the halls and into the wing areas and classrooms. Even the garden area and playground have a very special and welcoming feeling.

As we look back on the past fifty years and reminisce about the history of Meadow Pond - our building, students and staff, there are many things we can all be proud of. From the expansion of the building, the addition of our Mascot, Max the Moose and welcoming the students, staff and families from Lewisboro Elementary School, we have experienced many transformations. Through the decades and all of the changes, we would like to recognize that whatever we have accomplished, we have done it together. The sense of community and collaboration at Meadow Pond is exceptional. We strive to be our best, to be kind, to be respectful, to be responsible and to be safe.

As we look forward to the next fifty years, we are confident that these important ideals and connections will continue and expand. As we celebrate our Fiftieth Birthday, we would like to say that we are very proud to be the principal and assistant principal of Meadow Pond Elementary School!

Sincerely,

Carolann Castellano
Principal

Dawn Pomeroy
Assistant Principal

Sources

1. Images of America Lewisboro by Maureen Koehl. Arcadia Publishing 1977.
2. Historical papers. Town Historian, Maureen Koehl.
3. *MPES 25 Years Remembered*. 25th Anniversary Committee. Kathy Lauterbach, Chairperson.
4. MPES Archives.

Newspaper Key:

LL – Lewisboro Ledger

PT – Patent Trader

JN – Journal News

BKP – Bedford-Katonah Patch

My sincere thanks to Kathy Lauterbach, Amy Signore, Melissa Richardson, Jane Corace, Jackie Kovatch, Diane Moller and Cindy Mahan for their invaluable assistance documenting this history and for sharing their fond (and sometimes funny) memories of Meadow Pond Elementary School with all of us.