



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## Meet the 2020 Serino Superstars!

SUSAN SERINO January 14, 2021

| ISSUE: **SERINO SUPERSTARS**





### **Emily, Wappinger Junior High School**

**Nominator Says:** “Emily is one of the kindest young adults I know. She is very hard working and has been on the high honor roll while taking honors classes during her time at Wapp junior. She was one of the captains of her volleyball team, and a key member of a nationally ranked cheer team. She is also a leader for her youth group where she also sings on the worship team. Emily volunteers at our church in the children’s ministry and delivers food with out food pantry to those in need in Dutchess county. Emily has worked with the town of Wappingers teaching children gymnastics and tumbling skills. Recently Emily received her letter of acceptance for the Wappinger junior high national honors society. Emily plans on attending Our lady of Lourdes in the fall for 9th grade.”



**SJ & Issa, Haviland Middle School**

**Nominator Says:** “I nominate SJ and Issa Kakish for an amazing act of kindness. During this pandemic SJ and Issa wanted to give back to the Frontline workers. They wanted to thank the Healthcare workers for their sacrifice by putting themselves and their family in harms way by taking care of their community and their neighbors in the hospital. They came up with the idea to give ice cream sundaes as a great treat and a thank you. As parents we couldn't be prouder and thought the idea was amazing.”



### **Chase, Haldane Middle School**

**Nominator Says:** "I nominate Chase Nugent for his amazing work while distant learning. He is my 7th grade science student and he is also my DCI (Discover Create and Innovate) student. The DCI class focuses on improving the community in some way through community service.

While at home, Chase has done a number of activities to help our community during this difficult time. He has written kind notes to senior citizens living in assisted care, collected food for our local food pantry, put up and removed wooden crosses at the local church in memory of those lost (for Memorial Day), contacted our local fire chief for a beautification project of the fire house once the pandemic is over, and lastly, worked to design a T-Shirt for our new school motto TRUE Blue (students learn to show Teamwork, Responsibility, Understanding and Excellence at school and in the community).

At a time when students struggle to be motivated while working at home, Chase has excelled! He has continued with his school work as well as pursuing these activities which

improve our community. He has shown leadership, courage and kindness in these months and I am so proud of him! He is our Superstar!”



### **Amaria, Van Wyck Middle School**

**Nominator Says:** “Amaria Edwards is a leader in the school. She is one of the founders of the Cultural Dance Club. The club is open to students of all races and ethnicities.

Amaria leads with kindness, generosity of time, and empathy. She treats everyone with dignity, respect, and consideration. She is an excellent student and contributor of the school in so many ways.

Aside from modeling excellent behavior, Amaria helped create a video for students on good study habits and test-taking strategies. She also realized students need a sense of normalcy while on distance learning and advocated for re-starting the Cultural Dance Club in a virtual setting. She and two other students created the Google Classroom where they posted the

dance steps in a series of sessions for students to practice and perfect.

Amaria made a bad situation better by caring for the well-being of others. She unselfishly devoted her time to this worthy cause.”



**Molly Murphy, Millbrook Middle School**

**Nominator Says:** “While traditionally I am aware that nominating student's should occur individually I did not feel comfortable doing so in this instance. I could have done so and these two young ladies would have stood alone on their own individual merits, but their contributions this year embody teamwork, collaboration, and community in a way that honoring them together would be the only way to do their work justice. My secretary informed me that Julia and Molly would like to schedule a meeting with me, but could not

share the details. All she could share with me is that they wanted to make a difference in the world. Hearing these words I told her to cancel whatever I had going and that I would like to meet with them as soon as I could.

When we set a meeting date these two young people arrived in my office FULLY prepared for a business meeting. They were dressed for the occasion and came equipped with a plan and how to execute it. They shared with me a project called, "Save the Soles," that would create an avenue for the ladies to collect old or new shoes and then work with the local organization to have them shipped to an under privileged area in the world. They gave me time tables, organization techniques, flyer mock ups and ways to promote the event in the building. When it was all said and done they filled the entire box in the image and donated across seas.

These two young people had a vision of making a difference in their community and elsewhere. Their dreams were bigger than self and positively affected their fellow mankind. I cannot say how proud I am of them both. At the beginning of the year we had a building goal of collaboration. These two not only showed this with one another, their fellow classmates and community members, but also in people whom they do not even know. This is what it means to be a Millbrook Blazer... Go Blazers!"

### **Liam, Millbrook Middle School**

**Nominator Says:** "Liam is one of those rare middle school students that has a very strong sense of himself. He exudes confidence, commitment to his values and pursuits and an overall high level of enthusiasm/happiness. It is my opinion that it is Liam's own self worth that allows him to navigate the world of others who may not feel the same about themselves during what I believe is a long period of adolescence fraught with self doubt. This past year we had a 7th grader diagnosed with Spectrum Disorder break his leg while in PE. This

student happened to be in many of Liam's classes. As you may know this diagnosis presents enormous everyday challenges which multiplied exponentially physically, emotionally and mentally with this injury. As the school nurse, I was in an excellent position to witness the beautiful ways in which Liam came to this student's aide and allowed this "catastrophe" to become a transformative experience. Here are some examples:

1. Liam left every class early despite his strong sense of academia to carry James' books simultaneously cheering and coaching him while he learned the very slow process of using crutches.
2. Liam was often heard offering tips to James in a gentle manner about organization of his books and locker to aide in success in school.
3. Most importantly, Liam chose to talk and guide James through many potential and ongoing verbal and physical meltdowns to which he was very prone. As one of James' important supports, I can attest to the amazing success of Liam's interventions. Without a doubt Liam's support enabled James to remain or continue to class more often than many realized.

It is my strong opinion that Liam Thompsett was one of the largest, if not the most important factor, in James' successful navigation of the physical and emotional burdens of this injury in the school environment.

### **Aiden, Millbrook Middle School**

**Nominator Says:** "Aidan is of the highest caliber student Millbrook Middle School has to offer. Aidan works extremely hard in all of his classes and does everything in his power to be the best student he can be both academically, socially, and emotionally. His teachers discuss his efforts as not only being positive, but above and beyond that of his peers. One anecdote from



a teacher discussed a fellow classmate that was new to our building as he had been home schooled for many years previous and just getting accustomed to the new setting. Where many students struggle to understand the student's quirky personality or adjustments to traditional school Aidan stepped up and not only befriended the student, but encouraged others to do so as well.

Like many student's Aidan has struggled to get accustomed to distance learning and missed his peers and teachers. When he became frustrated with isolation, Aidan and his family developed a plan to not only feel better, but to recognize those who were working so hard for him on the other side of the computer. Each week Aidan, his sister, and mother would work on a sign diligently and then deliver it to a teacher or administrator's home. These signs included positive messages and thanks for the many efforts his staff had gone too.

We are truly appreciative of Aidan and think he would be well deserving of this recognition, GO BLAZERS!"

**Julia, Millbrook Middle School**

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