

Student and Staff Achievements March 2019

2018-2019 PTA Reflections Program

APPLES Preschooler **Avery Geigel** earned First Place in the *Connecticut PTA Reflections* art program, qualifying him to compete at the national competition in June. Reflections is National PTA's cornerstone art program, where more than 300,000 students in pre-K through Grade 12 enter their original works of art each year. On January 15, 2019, APPLES newly certified PTA held a Family Art Night in conjunction with the Reflections program. All APPLES students created drawings that reflected the theme "Heroes Around Me." Austin-based artist, Marcella Colavecchio chose the artwork of both **Alyson Quinta** and Avery for the state competition, in which Avery earned first place in the category of Special Artist Visual Arts Award. He will be honored at a Connecticut PTA Reception in May.

2019 National Merit Scholarship Program

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) named **Westhill High School** Seniors **John Basil Coleman** and **Julien Antoine Matrullo** as National Merit Finalists in the 64th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. According to the NMSC, finalists must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test. Some 15,000 students across the country have advanced to the Finalist level and will be eligible for three types of National Merit Scholarships to be awarded this spring.

2019 World Irish Dancing Championships

Westhill High School Freshman **Maggie Batton** and **Turn of River Middle School** Seventh Grader **Fiona Batton** have qualified to compete in the upcoming *2019 World Irish Dancing Championships*. Both dancers train at the Harney Pender Keady Academy of Irish Dance in Stamford and qualified at the New England Regionals and/or National Championships. Maggie placed seventh at the N.E. Regionals, and Fiona won the N.E. Regional Championship and placed second at Nationals in her age group. Competing at the World Championships is the highest level one can achieve in Irish dance, making these sisters among the top dancers in the world. The United States is hosting the Worlds for the first time since 2013. The competitions will be held in Greensboro, N.C., from Sunday, May 14 through Sunday May 21.

Dolphin Tank Competition

Academy of Information Technology & Engineering (AITE) Junior **Abigail Desyr** earned first place, **AITE** Freshman **Dante Ayars** earned second place and **Stamford High School (SHS)** Freshman **Neil Gawande** took third place, in Stamford's first-ever Dolphin Tank Competition. The Connecticut Small Business Development Center, Entrepreneurial Society of Stamford, Ferguson Library, Innovate Stamford and the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship sponsored the competition, which was based on the popular "Shark Tank" pitch-show concept. A student of AITE Entrepreneurship Teacher **Brenda Zanga**, Abigail's winning business plan is "The Lady Spotless Service," a closet, attic, garage and basement organizing service that partners with Goodwill and Habitat for Humanity. Dante's concept, Garbage Pal, is a mechanism that automatically re-lines a trashcan with a fresh bag when the full bag is removed and sprays an odor eliminator. Neils's proposal is "1Push Care," a simple, affordable device that connects individuals to emergency services and loved ones at the press of a button.