

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Michelle Yadoo
Marketing Communications Coordinator
516-922-4100, ext. 231

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A Mill Neck Manor Tradition: Story Time at Locust Valley School

Longstanding traditions are not always holiday-themed. For the past 21 years Betty Quartuccio, Speech Therapist at Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf, has been visiting Locust Valley kindergarten classes for a particularly interactive story time. At each visit, Quartuccio is accompanied by one of her Mill Neck students. Recently, Yoli Gomes, a high school student at Mill Neck, joined Quartuccio to present “The Gumdrop Tree” to the Locust Valley youngsters.

At the MacArthur school’s library, the kindergartners sat attentively as Quartuccio read aloud. Simultaneously, Gomes signed the words to the children. The engaging story revolves around some colorful gumdrops and a little girl’s wish to have more by planting them, hoping to grow a tree’s worth of the sweets. Quartuccio and Gomes paused several times during the story, allowing the children to practice some sign language with the names of the colors and other words in the book. The little ones were eager to try and showed off their dexterity in forming the signs. After the reading and the surprise unveiling of a “real” gumdrop tree, the kindergarten class was excited about creating their own trees.

The annual reading event serves a twofold purpose. One, Quartuccio said, “is to bridge the gap between deaf individuals and hearing students.” The other relates directly to her speech therapy work with her students, specifically, giving them additional opportunities to interact outside their Mill Neck environment. “It’s important for them to practice their communication skills in the community,” said Quartuccio.

Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf is part of the Mill Neck Family of Organizations, a not-for-profit group dedicated to serving Deaf and hard of hearing individuals through educational, vocational and spiritual programs and services. For more information about any of its programs, please call (516) 922-4100 or visit <http://www.millneck.org>.

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Photo Captions:

1. At the Ann MacArthur Primary School, Librarian Jacquie Galano and Betty Quartuccio, Speech Therapist at Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf, stand behind Mill Neck student Yoli Gomes and kindergartner Juliette D'Addario.
2. Yoli Gomes, student at Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf and Betty Quartuccio, Speech Therapist at Mill Neck, sign and read "The Gumdrop Tree" to kindergartners at Locust Valley's Ann MacArthur Primary School.
3. Yoli Gomes, student at Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf poses with kindergartners at Ann MacArthur Primary School as the children show off their own gumdrop trees.

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