

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Twice the Celebration at Mill Neck Manor's Deaf Education Center

Mill Neck Manor's Deaf Education Center (DEC) wrapped up the school year on a celebratory note with two graduations held a day apart. The DEC's preschool children received their diplomas in anticipation of heading off to kindergarten in their home school districts in September. The eight little grads, adorable in their special occasion clothes, charmed the gathering of families, friends and Mill Neck students and staff with a performance of several songs before accepting their diplomas.

Five high school seniors celebrated their milestone the following day at a ceremony attended by several members of the Mill Neck Manor Board of Trustees and alumni, in addition to proud families and school staff. The class of 2013, Maximo Cutire, China Minichino, Michael Mullady, Jhovaughn Palmer and Rachel Ponce de Leon, began the program by taking the stage to sign the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. An invocation given by The Reverend Dennis Konkel was followed by several speakers.

In her welcoming remarks, Interim Superintendent Francine Atlas Bogdanoff talked about the reality of change when she related, "Someone once said, 'the only constant in our lives is change'. Today is your graduation day, a day of change. You leave school today... tomorrow, you can look forward to the next set of changes." She encouraged the graduates to have confidence in their skills, by adding, "I know that you will cope with these changes."

Nancy Tseng, a 2004 Mill Neck graduate, relayed some experiences from her seven years at Mill Neck. She concluded by suggesting to the graduates, "take the next step to achieving your dreams." DEC Principal Katie Kerzner and Speech Therapist Betty Quartuccio offered their words of inspiration, as well as their personal recollections of the class of 2013. Prior to the conferring of diplomas and awards, Valedictorian Jhovaughn Palmer recalled his own memories of 13 years he spent at Mill Neck. After several vignettes, he acknowledged the Mill Neck community for helping him become the young man he's grown into, by saying, "I am smarter,

because of you. I am an individual, with a personality that makes people laugh, because of you. I am a more responsible person who understands the challenges in life, because of you. I know now that I can achieve any goal I set out to accomplish, because of you!”

Among the several awards handed out was the Brian Sosnowski Memorial Award given to the Most Responsible Worker; the Mill Neck Services Award for Perseverance; the James McCarthy Memorial Award for Community Service and the Mill Neck Manor Alumni Association Eunice P. Weidner Memorial Scholarship for Academics. These awards were presented to China Minichino, Michael Mullady, Rachel Ponce de Leon and Jhovaughn Palmer, respectively.

The three college-bound graduates, Maximo Cutire, Michael Mullady and Jhovaughn Palmer, were each awarded the Melvin W. Luebke Memorial Scholarship. Maximo and Jhovaughn are headed to Nassau Community College in the fall, and Michael will be attending the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), a college of the Rochester Institute of Technology.

The Mill Neck Family is proud of all the accomplishments by both our little preschool scholars and our seniors. Congratulations Grads! Thank you for giving us two times the celebration!

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. Mill Neck Manor Class of 2013 (from left): Michael Mullady, Rachel Ponce de Leon, Jhovaughn Palmer, China Minichino, Maximo Cutire.
2. In his graduation address, valedictorian Jhovaughn Palmer, shared memories of his Mill Neck years.
3. DEC Pre-K grads will head off to kindergarten in their home school districts.

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