

# MANHASSET PRESS

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## Manhasset Circus Captivates Town



Having fun riding a camel in Memorial Park (Photo by E. Johnson)

By ELIZABETH JOHNSON

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The skies were overcast, but the smiles were sunny for the 13th Annual Manhasset Children's Circus. This yearly Rotarian event brings together the Manhasset, Great Neck and Port communities to come and enjoy the entertainment of a one ring extravaganza produced by the Zerbini Circus.

Ringmaster Robby Donno serves as Master of Ceremonies. The demand is so extraordinary that the Rotary had to make two shows, one at 4:45 p.m. and another two hours later. The field is alive with children on ponies and camel backs. A bouncing castle sets the stage for fun. Meanwhile sponsors, including Douglas Elliman, Coach, Laffey and Daniel Gale, just to name a few, sponsors handed-out balloons and other goodies.

See CIRCUS on page 14



## Blue Ribbon School

Munsey Park Elementary School has been recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School. On Tuesday, Sept. 30, the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, officially conferred the designation on Munsey Park School, making Manhasset the proud recipient of not one, but three National Blue Ribbon designations. Both the Manhasset Secondary School and Shelter Rock Elementary School have previously received this honor.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Every year, the U.S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools—schools demonstrating all students can achieve high levels.

The National Blue Ribbon School Award affirms the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging content.

## Caryn Sawyer Takes Reins At CASA

By ELIZABETH JOHNSON

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October is a time of transition with the changing of seasons; this is true also for Manhasset CASA with Lisa Vecchio Belinsky resigning as executive director. Since 2001, Lisa has volunteered as a Manhasset CASA Board member and has also been an active SCA volunteer in Manhasset

Public Schools with four children graduating from the district. Manhasset CASA recognizes and thanks Lisa for the important role she has played in making a difference in the lives of our children, families, and community.

Assuming the Executive Director position is Caryn Sawyer, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist and board member of Manhasset CASA with two children in the district. Caryn's

energy and expertise will complement CASA's mission and goals to reduce underage drinking and drug use and help children grow up healthy and safe in Manhasset.

Autumn is always a busy time for Manhasset CASA as October is designated as the nation's Substance Abuse Prevention and Bullying Prevention Awareness months.

See CASA on page 12

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# Five Students Confirmed At Congregational Church



**2014 Congregational Church Confirmation Class: (L to R front row) Molly Alpert, Devin Callery, Grace D'Ariano (L to R back row) Rev. Lori Burgess, Mackenzie Alpert, Christa Durso, Rev. Jimmy Only**

By **MANHASSET PRESS STAFF**  
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In the spring, the Congregational Church of Manhasset Confirmed five students: Mackenzie Alpert, Molly Alpert, Devin Callery, Grace D'Ariano, and Christa Durso. Every year the class reflects the diverse membership of the Manhasset church drawing not only from the Congregational/UCC tradition, but also from Presbyterian, United Methodist, Greek Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches among others. Throughout the year, the Confirmants attended weekly classes, completed journal assignments,

and attended a retreat. Before being Confirmed, the participants wrote papers about their faith journeys.

Confirmation classes recently started for the 2014-15 program year. The classes are taught by Rev. Jimmy Only and Rev. Lori Burgess. The classes are open to students from any religious background and to those who have no formal religious education. Confirmants are typically in the eighth grade, but exceptions can be made. For inquiries about the 2014-15 Confirmation class may call the church office at 627-4911.

For info on the Congregational Church activities, visit [www.ucmanhasset.com](http://www.ucmanhasset.com).

## CASA from page 1

Special thanks to Manhasset SCA volunteers Jennifer Balsamo, Heidi Franchetti, Jennifer Hicks Johnson, and Denise St. Jeanos for their efforts coordinating our elementary schools' Red Ribbon Week Prevention Awareness Celebration during the week of October 27th. This year's theme, Friends Don't Let Friends Bully or Do Drugs reinforces the importance of children being kind to each other and making healthy



choices. Studies show that whether a child is a victim or a bully, they are more likely than others to experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

**Pictured left to right: newly appointed Executive Director Caryn Sawyer, Psy. D., Eugene A. Petracca, Jr., CASA board president; Cathy Samuels, project director and Lisa Vecchio Belinsky, former executive director (Photo by Elizabeth Johnson)**



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