



# Health and Wellness Alliance

*This newsletter is funded through a health and wellness grant sponsored by Compass, which strives to inspire the West Islip community to mobilize, unify and coordinate its resources to ensure the health and well-being of its children, reduce substance abuse, create a strong collaboration and cultivate healthy attitudes and behaviors.*

## MRSA and Viral Meningitis Presentation



On November 18th, a presentation on MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) was held at Udall Road Middle School. Dr. Howard Balbi, Director of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Good Samaritan Hospital discussed the strain of staph bacteria that does not respond

to penicillin and related antibiotics. This strain can however, be treated with other drugs. The infection can be spread by skin-to-skin contact or by sharing clothing or towel used by an infected person.

“MRSA is a type of staph infection that is preventable. Washing your hands is the best prevention.”

-Dr. Howard Balbi

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) MRSA is a type of staph infection that is resistant to

certain antibiotics, including methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and health care facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems.

MRSA infections that are acquired by persons who have not been recently (within the past year) hospitalized or had a medical procedure (such as dialysis, surgery, catheterization) are known as CA-MRSA infections. Staph or MRSA infections in the community are usually manifested as skin infections, such as pimples and boils, and occur in otherwise healthy people.

“This presentation helps residents to understand MRSA and other viral and bacterial infections, and how to prevent them,” said Tim Horan, coordinator of the program.

## Compass Update

### Setting Goals for 2009

Compass is looking forward to continuing many of the wonderful programs including student and parent awareness nights and community events it has offered in the past. We are looking to strive to: reduce substance abuse among our youth, cultivate healthy attitudes and behaviors and create a strong collaboration with the community.

Nutrition is a very important priority for COMPASS. With the holiday season comes an abundance of dining choices. Compass encourages healthy holiday eating habits which include: choosing nutritional foods and awareness of high calorie foods, especially salad dressings and desserts; eat something before you go to events so your appetite will be curbed; eat a lot of fruits and vegetables before the main course to reduce your appetite; balance out your food choices by eating your favorite holiday foods in reasonable portions; and don't overeat when under stress, which may result in binge eating.

In addition to practicing good nutrition habits, don't forget to exercise.



## Let's Have Lunch

*Greetings from the West Islip Food Services Program!*

Now that the students are settled in and are enjoying school lunch, we hope you have noticed our focus on fruits and vegetables, low-fat milks, tossed salads and whole grain breads. Our District participates in the National School Breakfast/Lunch Program and provides nutritious foods for children, thereby contributing to their daily dietary requirements set in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This program endeavors to function as an integral part of the entire educational program, by encouraging good eating habits and offering menus carefully devised for nutrition as well as taste appeal.

We'd like to thank you for your cooperation and participation in using PaySchools, our new online prepayment system, which continues to be a success.

Please note that applications for free and reduced price school meals may be submitted/resubmitted at any time during the school year if family circumstances change. Applications are available at each school, in the Administration Building and on the District Website: [www.wi.k12.ny.us](http://www.wi.k12.ny.us)

Bon Appétit!

West Islip School District  
Freyer Administration Bldg.  
100 Sherman Avenue  
West Islip, NY 11795

**Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Beth Virginia Blau

**Board of Education**

George K. Smith, *President*  
Steven D. Gellar, *Vice President*  
Sharon Biesel  
Eliot Bloom  
Annmarie LaRosa  
Wayne Smith  
Robert Ulrich

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*  
**Residential Customer**  
West Islip, NY 11795

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit #4  
West Islip, NY  
11795

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Islander Game Night

COMPASS is offering \$35 discounted Islander tickets (regularly \$50) as part of a community gathering at a New York Islanders game on Saturday, January 17. Islanders will be playing the N.J. Devils. Information was sent home with students in grades K-8. For more information call Mr. John Mullins at 893-3390.

### YOGA/Open Gym

COMPASS will sponsor YOGA sessions for the community in the High School fitness center in January. In addition, an "Open Gym" will be available to Middle School students (ie volleyball and basketball) throughout the course of the year.

### COPE Open Forums

Precinct COPE officers will hold Community Forums to address community concerns or issues on the first Tuesday of each month, at 7pm at the 3rd Precinct Building located at 1630 5th Avenue in Bay Shore.

### 2009 Wellness Weekend & Fun Run

Preparations are being made for this year's Wellness Weekend which will take place on Friday, March 6th and Saturday, March 7th, concluding with the Fun Run on March 8th.

### 5K Fun Run, Walk & Jogathon Sponsorship

If you are interested in sponsoring the Fun Run please mail a check for \$150, fill out the information below and return it to:

Wide Fun Run, J. Wayne Shierant, 100 Sherman Ave.,  
West Islip, NY 11795 before January 9, 2009.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Your sponsorship will support the West Islip Substance Abuse Awareness Week's 5k Fun Run, Walk and Jogathon.

### Awareness Nights

On November 19th, West Islip COMPASS Coalition sponsored its first awareness night of the year, the "The Escape School" program, at Paul J. Bellew Elementary School. With well over 200 participants, the program focused on Stranger Danger issues, and taught children how to differentiate between good and bad strangers, the common lures abductors use, how to "get away, right away" and how to find help when needed. The program was sponsored by Charles Spencer of Spencer-Boyd Funeral Homes of Babylon West Islip, a member of the Dignity Memorial network, who supplied coloring books, pencils, stickers and t-shirt prizes. COMPASS will offer awareness nights for elementary and middle school parents and students throughout the school year. Future Awareness Night topics will include: bullying, internet safety, racial/ethnic bias awareness, current alcohol and drug trends and how to be an askable parent.



### Flu Shot Recommendation

Suffolk County Department of Health has announced that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that children 6 months through 18 years of age get the flu shot. In addition to the flu vaccination, children should be encouraged to cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, and to wash their hands with soap and water. For more information go to CDC's web site at [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm).

### Head Lice Alert

Please be aware that there is a head lice alert in the district. Letters have been sent out from schools informing parents of methods of prevention, screening and treatment for head lice. Head lice is a common nuisance in institutions and classrooms, and treatment is simple. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Please send correspondence to: Editor Sarah Anker  
West Islip School District, 100 Sherman Avenue, New York 11795,  
email at: [s.anker@wi.k12.ny.us](mailto:s.anker@wi.k12.ny.us) or call 893-3200, ext. 1580.