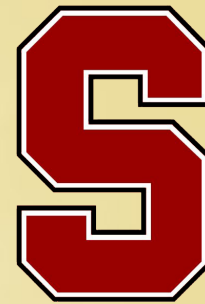


# Syosset Bright Spots

## #syostrong



Throughout the pandemic, Syosset students not only continued their altruistic efforts, but further amplified them at a time when they were needed the most. The District commends the efforts of all these students, as well as the many other students quietly doing their part to enact positive change, make our local community and world a better place, and to provide some comfort to those in need. Together, we are #syostrong.

### Donations Raised for National Charities

- Nina Rashid founded interfaith coalition “Changemaker Interfaith Group” and raised \$1,000 for Domestic Harmony Foundation
- Kimberly Saltsberg raised \$11,000 for Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation
- Max Falkove, Mollie Falkove and Aaron Hafkin created Gold Ribbon Riders Teen Initiative, a non-profit organization that partners with Cycle for Survival and raised over \$105,000 to end rare cancers by funding pediatric cancer research. Team captains included: Avery Aaronson, Emma Birnbaum, Madison Birnbaum, Victoria Costa, Benji Falkove, Harris Goldstein, Raia Honig, Sally Jamieson, Molly Lebolt, Katelyn Lee, Brody Levine, Sammy Schoenfeld, Lizzy Shyer, Cooper Steinberger, Evan Strominger, Paige Weinstein, and Claire Wilensky
- Aayush Turakhia founded “For the Students by the Students,” a charity that collects excess school supplies and provides them to children in need. Inspired by an opportunity to visit a classroom in an underprivileged community in India, they aim to help students build a better future by providing them with the tools needed to succeed in the classroom.
- Work Based Learning Classes at SHS organized a fundraising campaign and raised over \$1,500 for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, The Humane Society, and the Wounded Warrior Project.
- Students formed the Syosset Relief Club at the high school. Formed just last school year, the club is an official American Red Cross Club with over 200 members. Led by Co-Presidents Ethan Chiu and Brian Chou, they’ve engaged in beach clean-ups, fundraising, and local food drive partnerships, and once COVID-19 hit, they raised almost \$5,000 for the American Red Cross and donated 1,000 masks to the Nassau University Medical Center.
- Syosset High School siblings Avery and Chase Aaronson started participating in walk-a-thons to support the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation as small children, and during the pandemic have worked to reinvent their fundraising efforts with a virtual Great Strides walk. Avery and Chase were recently recognized by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation during Volunteer Appreciation Week for their long-term support of the organization.
- Students in the Work Based Learning Classes at Syosset High School spent months planning a fundraising campaign and their hard work resulted in over \$1,500 raised for three charities, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, The Humane Society, and the Wounded Warrior Project, by selling masks they made with their teacher.
- Anouska Jhaveri donated \$972 to support the education of underprivileged girls in India. She started a small business by creating and selling bracelets and continues to contribute her proceeds to non-profit organization Nanhi Kali to provide opportunities to girls in need.



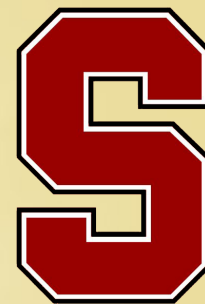
- Henry Berkowitz raised over \$3,000 for National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).
- 8th grader Anjali Singh spearheaded a book drive with the Student Activity Club and collected over 700 books for students in Africa.
- Maya Sharma raised \$20,000 over three years to donate to Angel House, an organization that builds homes for orphans in India. Her ambitious goal has provided housing, food and education for 12 orphans.

### **Donations Raised for Local Charities**

- Students Maggie Liu, Abigail Wu and Caroline Zhu and members of the Combat Corona club hosted a Spring Drive for the homeless. The result of their efforts was 2 tons of food, clothing, and supplies donated to the Mary Brennan Inn, Long Island Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, and the People Loving People food pantry.
- Sally Biondo raised over \$1,300 for Peoples Pantry in Oyster Bay.
- Matthew Kusnetz donated over 10 pounds of vegetables to local food pantries.
- Brothers Joseph and Jake Gagliano (10th and 8th grade respectively) created a volunteer organization they named The 364. Their team distributed toiletries to Long Island shelters and plans to volunteer at a food pantry.
- Middle school student Georgia Martin and high school students Noora Zakaria and Michelle Yiu were featured in Newsday for donating their time and talents as well as decorations, goodie bags and baked goods to Birthday Wishes, a non-profit that provides supplies for children in homeless shelters and foster care to have birthday celebrations.
- Fifth grader Rheya Shah organized a toy drive and collected 160 toys for children in a Long Island homeless shelter run by the Family Service League.
- South Woods Middle School student Samantha Weingarten sold lawn signs so that families can show their pride in students moving up to the high school while simultaneously raising money for the St. Edward's food pantry.
- Samantha Smith collected graduation caps and gowns to help students in need.

### **COVID Relief, Support for First Responders and Essential Workers**

- Sabrina Guo founded Long Island Against Covid-19 (LILAC).
  - With Eric Wang, Azam Lalani and Marla Hakim, they raised over \$90,000, donated 140,000+ PPE items to over 30 facilities in LI/NYC, and served tens of thousands of frontline and essential workers, high-risk groups, and financially disadvantaged areas in south shore and Queens communities.
  - The organization donated 20,000 pieces of PPE, \$2,000 worth of meals, and student-created inspirational artwork to Mount Sinai South Nassau.
- Sabrina and LILAC were selected by the Disney Channel as the flagship of Disney's 2021 "Use Your Voice" social initiative. View the Disney Channel video, and Sabrina's important message, here: [Sabrina and LILAC | Use Your Voice | Disney Channel - YouTube](#)



- Caroline Zhu started a GoFundMe campaign named “COVID-19 Relief for Small Businesses NYC/LI” and then founded a group called “Students Combat Corona,” to help with fundraising efforts and nominating businesses in need. The group has grown to 150 student members and they’ve raised over \$3,800.
- Uma and Eesha Kaushik raised more than \$23,000 through their GoFundMe account to purchase and deliver masks and personal protective equipment to healthcare workers.
- In an impressive collaborative effort between teachers and the freshman Robotics team Syosset ELITE, over 240 face shields were created and donated to nursing homes and hospitals.
- Ethan Silverstein, a Syosset High School 10th grader, worked with First Robotics to donate 600 goggles to St. Francis hospital and donated face masks made on his 3D printer.
- HBT student Misbah Iqbal, along with fellow HBT student Bella Chvasta, organized a fundraiser selling refreshments and reached out to family and friends for donations. As a result, approximately \$2,000 was raised to ship oxygen concentrators and other much needed supplies directly to India.
- Syborgs 10696, a SHS Robotics team, started a global initiative named #TYfromFIRST, to show the collective gratitude the entire FIRST Robotics community has for our heroic healthcare workers, police and firemen, and other essential workers. Faith Chen, Rhea Sharma and Ethan Silverstein worked with approximately one hundred (and counting!) teams globally to produce this heartfelt video.
- SWMS student Krishiv Shah created an app, “Social Distancing,” to help people maintain an appropriate distance from others and stay safe.
- And a special mention to three local families, the Weiskopfs, Arkers and Gallows, who organized community BINGO games to raise money for the Northwell COVID-19 Emergency Fund and Island Harvest's COVID-19 Emergency efforts, as well as support local businesses impacted by the pandemic.

## **Cultural Unity**

- Inspired by the Witness Project, whose mission is to explore the spiritual, ethical, and intellectual responses of Holocaust survivors and victims, student Laci Janus started the Holocaust Remembrance Program, a program at the high school to foster a deeper understanding of the Holocaust.
- Sabrina Guo and siblings Alan and Elizabeth Huang organized a rally for Peace, Unity, and Action.
- South Woods and H.B. Thompson Chamber Orchestras combined for a special performance to raise awareness and stand up against racism and hate.
- In partnership with students from across the U.S., middle school student Grace Chenxin Liu co-founded the student-led organization ABC Media, which showcases student-created multimedia works highlighting Chinese culture.



## **Students Sharing Their Knowledge**

- Asmita Mittal founded “Teens Teach Technology” that established partnerships with local libraries across multiple states to teach basics of technology to the older adult population.
- Robotics Team ELITE launched CADemy, where they provide programming lessons to students.
- Prisha Arora began teaching young students how to paint over the summer. After seeing the positive reaction, she continued her work by creating painting tutorials on a YouTube channel, providing a creative outlet and stress reliever for children during these uncertain times.
- Evan Cheng and Michael Lan started “Music Relief” - a program to offer music education to students who can't afford professional lessons, serving over 100 students nationwide. Donations received from parents have been used to provide food to the Ronald McDonald House of Long Island.