



# Highlights

A Publication of the Harrison Central School District

## HHS Debate Team Achieves Unprecedented Success

The 2020-2021 Debate season is Harrison High School's most successful to date and the fourth time a Harrison debater has been ranked #1 nationally since the team's inception in 2009/10 school year.

Varsity Lincoln-Douglas debaters have won 15 tournaments this year, including national championships at Harvard University, the Glenbrook (Illinois), Apple Valley (Minnesota - championships in both varsity and JV), Princeton University, and Yale University (JV). Harrison debaters have earned a record 27 qualifying bids to the Tournament of Champions, and have qualified 9 students to the National Debate Coaches Association's national championship, 4 students to the National Catholic Forensic League's national championship, 2 students to the National Speech & Debate Association's national championship, and 10 students to the New York State Forensic League's state championship. Debaters also have earned 10 Top Speaker Awards. Five Harrison debaters are currently ranked in the top 22 nationally: **#1 Giovanni Cutri, #3 Ali Ahmed, #6 Rebecca Anderson, #19 Sonali Nicoli, and #22 Molly Ryan** and hold nine of the top 11 spots in New York State: **#1 Giovanni Cutri #2 Ali Ahmed, #3 Rebecca Anderson, #4 Sonali Nicola, #5 Molly Ryan, #7 Anthony Kang, #8 Annie Chen, #10 Jessie Pein, and #11 Mai Blaustein.**

**Giovanni Cutri is ranked #1 Lincoln-Douglas debater, both nationally and in New York State**, won multiple national tournaments, is the first Harrison debater to win the Newark tournament two times, earned 10 bids to the Tournament of Champions this season; was top speaker at multiple national tournaments.

**Ali Ahmad is ranked #3 Lincoln-Douglas debater nationally and #2 in New York State**, won multiple national championships, and earned 11 bids to the Tournament of Champions, tying the highest bids by a Harrison debater.

**Rebecca Anderson is ranked the #6 Lincoln-Douglas debater nationally and #3 in New York State**, has won or placed among top debaters, earned top speaker recognition at national tournaments and 3 bids to the Tournament of Champions.

Varsity Debate coach Chetan Hertzog shares, "This competitive season has been extraordinary in every way. With incredible dedication, our debaters have been able to surmount the considerable challenges posed by online debate to achieve the most successful year in our team's history." [Read more](#)



Debate team members with coach Mr. Hertzog

## Senior Tyler Burden Wins National Dance Award



The National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) announced Harrison High School senior, **Tyler Burden** has been selected by the National Honor

Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA) adjudication committee as a National Finalist of the **2021 NDEO Artistic Merit, Leadership, and Academic Achievement Award**. In addition, NDEO recognizes NHSDA Chapter Sponsor, Deborah Toteda, Harrison High School dance teacher, for outstanding teaching, leadership, and guidance. The **NDEO Artistic Merit, Leadership, and Academic Achievement Award** is one of the highest honors a young person can achieve at the national level in the dance arts field. Applicants are rated based on the strength of their technical and artistic merit, leadership, and academic achievement. Each category is assessed through a self-choreographed solo video, two essays, student transcript, recommendation letter, and resume. The award is based on achieving excellence in three categories: Artistic Merit, Leadership, and Academic Achievement. [Read more](#)

# HHS Science Research Students Earn Top Honors

## *Arwen O'Brien '21 Qualifies for Regeneron Competition*

Harrison High School Senior Arwen Fernandez O'Brien finished in the top 15 projects at the New York State Science and Engineering Fair and qualified for Regeneron ISEF 2021 (International Science and Engineering Fair). This is the first time a Harrison student has qualified for this international fair in 3 years. Seniors

Tochi Onwuasoanya placed second and Larissa Iraj placed third in the competition among top student scientists from high schools across New York State.

The New York State Science and Engineering Fair (NYSSEF) and Westchester Science & Engineering Fair (WESEF) provides statewide and regional forums to showcase the outstanding research by high school students. Both science fairs encourage students to participate in hands-on science research during their high school careers. Harrison High School Science Research students performed well at the regional and state fairs this year and earned many awards. The Harrison High School Science Research program is open to students in grades 10, 11, and 12. The program supports student participation in authentic and original scientific research. Students work with scientists and professionals within their chosen area of interest to conduct independent research in mathematics, life science, physical science, psychology, or the social sciences. Students submit their work in science fairs, where they are judged alongside other top student research projects.



Arwen O'Brien

Tochi Onwuasoanya

Larissa Iraj

### New York State Science and Engineering Fair

**Arwen Fernandez O'Brien - Regeneron ISEF Winner**

**Tochi Onwuasoanya - 2nd Place**

**Larissa Iraj - 3rd Place**

### Westchester Science & Engineering Fair Best in Category Awards

**Larissa Iraj:** 1st Place, Medicine and Health

**Tochi Onwuasoanya:** 2nd Place, Animal Sciences

**Julina Paruta:** 2nd Place, Medicine and Health

**Maria Saes:** 3rd Place, Behavior

**Madison Schiro:** 3rd Place, Animal Sciences

**Morgan Remeza:** 3rd Place, Math

**Roya Azar:** 4th Place, Cellular & Molecular Biology

**Lauren Davidson:** 4th Place, Cellular & Molecular Biology

**Bailey Fisher:** 4th Place, Engineering

**Hannah Karkout:** 4th Place, Medicine & Health

### Special Awards

*David M. Holmes WESEF Engineering Innovation Award:* **Bailey Fisher**

*Community Impact Award:* **Jillian Williams**

*Future of Medicine Award:* **Larissa Iraj**

*Excellence in Medical Research Award:* **Arwen Fernandez O'Brien**

*Innovations in Biological Sciences Research Award:* **Tyler Burden**

*NOAA Taking the Pulse of the Planet Award:* **Maddy Stagg**



## HHS Senior Joshua Gomes-Cruz Recognized as Outstanding Delegate



HHS Senior Joshua Gomes-Cruz was recognized as Outstanding Delegate by the Hudson Valley in the 2021 Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute. The Hudson Valley Delegation Leaders select one Outstanding Delegate each year, a student who goes above and beyond during the training sessions and in their academic/extracurricular life. Joshua was among 74 students from the Hudson Valley region selected by the Puerto Rican Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute Students to participate in virtual training sessions to learn more about public speaking, government, leadership, NYS Assembly protocol, essay writing, and debate skills. Upon completion of the training program the students participated in an Albany-based virtual event that included cultural and leadership workshops, debating bills and a Mock Assembly session.

## HHS Sophomore Shweta Nadagouda Wins Honorable Mention



Harrison High School Sophomore, Shweta Nadagouda, won honorable mention in the *Lifting Up Westchester* 2021 essay contest. The contest asked students to write an essay in response to the question “What I Learned from the Pandemic.” The contest is open to 7th – 12th grade students who live and attend school in Westchester and was judged in 4 divisions; Shweta was recognized in the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> grade division for her essay.

Throughout her essay, Shweta explores the many challenges she and the world has faced over the past year, but ends with a positive outlook, “In so many ways this pandemic has shut doors but has opened new ones as well.”

Shari Heyn, HHS guidance counselor, describes Shweta as a “fabulous student” who is “curious, hardworking, kind, inquisitive, happy...[who] recognizes that challenge is where the real learning happens and therefore, leans in.”

*Lifting Up Westchester* is a non-profit agency committed to helping individuals achieve self-sufficiency.



## 7th Annual Relay for Life Event to be held May 22nd at Harrison High School



Relay For Life of Harrison will hold the 7th annual event in-person on Saturday May 22nd, from 5:30pm-9:30pm at Harrison High School. There will be fun activities and games for families and friends to enjoy. The event will bring the community together in a safe way to continue our fight against cancer by supporting those who are still battling and by honoring those we’ve lost. Please make sure to sign up for a team via the [Harrison Relay For Life website](https://www.harrisonrelayforlife.com/).



## 2021 IB Visual Arts Virtual Exhibition

The 2021 International Baccalaureate Program Visual Arts Virtual Exhibition features works created by students enrolled in the IB Visual Arts program at Harrison High School. Students began the IB Visual Arts program during junior year, and as seniors developed a body of work intended to explore ideas and concepts that have inspired. Each student artist brings talent, imagination, and a unique approach as they journey to discover creative voices through art. [Enjoy the work of our talented students!](#) **2021 IB Visual Arts Virtual Exhibition Featured Student Artists: Sophia Bell, Sonia Vanessa Carrillo, Lucia Daher, Leilah El Azizi, Trinity Fay, Paulina Flores, Faith Ildefonso, Jahmar Jarrett, Claire Juergens, Alexandra Karofsky, Ceara Kretzmer, Jessica Leckart, Isabella Medina, Julia Merolle, Nell Shapiro, Madison Tuminaro, Kenneth Viveros**

## HHS Student Work Presented at StArt



### Exhibit 2021

Work by Harrison High School Visual and Digital Arts students was on display at the [StArt](#) Regional High Schools Art Exhibition at the

OSILAS Gallery of Concordia College. The exhibit celebrates the artistic abilities of high school artists from more than 30 regional public and private high schools across Westchester, Fairfield, Rockland and Orange Counties and the Bronx. Works by HHS artists **Mai Blaustein, Ami Goble** and **Madison Lucas** are featured in the [virtual exhibition](#).

## LMK Drama Club Provides Rousing "Comic" Relief for Virtual Audience



The LMK Drama Club presented a hilarious, action-packed virtual production of ***Adventures of a Comic Book Artist***. The student performances received rave reviews from all who watched the travails of Stanley Leonardo Sappovitz, achieving his dream to become a comic book artist. Preparing for the show was unlike anything students have experienced before. Students rehearsed by Zoom and recorded scenes in virtual meeting rooms, and recorded songs individually at home that were stitched together, allowing cast members to occupy a common virtual space, since sharing a real-world stage was not possible. The directors reflected on why the show's message is important, especially today, "We find transformation inspiring. It teaches all of us that we don't have to be defined by the bad things that happen to us; we can rise up, overcome, and use personal tragedies to fuel a crusade to make the world a better place. It teaches us that being a hero starts with a choice - the choice to get up and keep moving forward when the world knocks you down."

## Seniors Featured at Katonah Museum Young Artists Exhibit



Harrison High School seniors exhibited their work at the Young Artists 2021 exhibition at the Katonah Museum of Art in February. The program is designed to present work of the "next generation of creative thinkers and artists." The 38<sup>th</sup> year of the exhibition presented the work of the most talented high school seniors in the area. We are proud of the nine exceptional HHS seniors whose work was featured in the exhibit: **Leilah El Azizi, Tristan An, Isabella Medina, Emma Santizo, Claire Juergens, Matthew Lustrin, Ceara Kretzmer, Faith Ildefonso, Drake Martin**



# HARRISON ATHLETICS



## Joe Cardascia Is Named Track Athlete of the Year

Senior Joe Cardascia was named the Journal News/lohud Westchester/Putnam Track Athlete of the Year. *"In a winter in which high school track athletes were happy to get near their personal-best time in any event (or even simply get a chance to compete), Joe Cardascia had a season to remember."* -Journal News/lohud 4/14/21

This indoor track season, Joe posted personal best times in four events. At the Adidas Indoor National meet, Joe ran the 400 meter in 48.93 seconds, the fifth fastest time ever clocked in Section 1 and fourth fastest in Westchester County. His 400 time at nationals also earned him 4<sup>th</sup> place and All American honors.

Varsity track coach Dom Zanot considers Joe one of the top athletes he has coached, "Joe Cardascia is an excellent example of a student-athlete who showed continuous growth and development from 9th grade through his senior year. His commitment and dedication to improvement before the pandemic was outstanding, but during the pandemic it increased exponentially. Joe Cardascia will not only go down as one of Harrison Track & Field's all time greats, but one of the all time greats in Westchester County."

Earlier this year, Joe signed a commitment letter to SUNY Binghamton where he will continue his career as a track athlete.



## Senior Tyler Joseph Clinches NYS Wrestling Championship

Harrison High School senior Tyler Joseph clinched the New York State Wrestling Championship at the 170 lb weight class in the Journeyman/Rudis NYS Wrestling Championships, featuring the top wrestlers from New York State. Tyler is the first Harrison wrestler to earn the state championship title. In a bracket that included 32 wrestlers from Division 1 and 2, Tyler won all five matches leading to the final competition without giving up a point. The championship match went into double overtime; Tyler scored an escape and a takedown with time running out to win the match and earn the state title. Tyler also was named the Con Edison Athlete of the Week. A three-season team captain, Tyler posted a stellar career as a Husky Wrestler with the most all-time wins (191) in program history. In addition to winning the 2021 State Championship title, Tyler has qualified for state competition three times, earned all-state honors twice, all section five times, and all league six times. He is a two time Westchester County Wrestling Champion and Section One Leadership Award Winner.

Tyler, who earned All American honors after placing in the top 8 at Nationals April, will continue his wrestling career as a student athlete at the University of Chicago.