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Maud Abrams School's K-Kids raise funds for needy families

By **JACK FICHTER**
 Cape May Star and Wave

COLD SPRING — Community service is a lesson learned young by the K-Kids of the Maud Abrams School who helped stage a spaghetti dinner as a fundraiser to provide groceries to needy families.

On Feb. 12, the Maud Abrams K-Kids held a spaghetti dinner sponsored by the Kiwanis Club.

At a Feb. 26 Lower Township Elementary Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Jeff Samaniego said students not only hosted the event but acted as servers of a meal that included salad, bread, spaghetti and meatballs and ice cream. He said all proceeds went to the Lower Township Schools Children's Dinner Fund.

The first Children's Dinner Fund delivery of 2019 was Feb. 13, when volunteers delivered bags of groceries to families in need, Samaniego said, adding that students and staff bagged the groceries.

Samaniego said volunteers from the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs assisted, as well as current and retired teachers.

"There are 662 students that qualify and 446 families were served a bag of groceries on that day," he said. "The cost for that is little over \$5,000 that we raised. We could not do that without so many generous donations."

Maud Abrams School third-grade teachers Teresa Morris and Eileen Oleksiak-Hall and their K-Kids team presented a check for \$938 to the Children's Dinner Fund.

Oleksiak-Hall said K-Kids is an outreach of the Kiwanis Club focusing on helping children and young adults become volunteers in their community.

"Kiwanis believe, and I concur, there is no better way to foster such a commitment than to plant the seed to serve at a young age, hence K-Kids," she said.

Over the years, K-Kids have helped beautify local gardens with plantings,



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Maud Abrams School third-grade teachers Teresa Morris and Eileen Oleksiak-Hall and their K-Kids presented a check for \$938 to the Children's Dinner Fund.

collected food for the area needy, washed cars and held pet supply drives for the county animal shelter, Oleksiak-Hall said.

Morris said the spaghetti dinner was a major project involving a lot of planning, teamwork, serving and cleanup. She said after the dinner, they presented school district Business Administrator John Hansen with \$938.

"I said, however, this is before our food costs, so this isn't really our profit just yet," Morris said.

She said the next morning at school she was met by Food Service Director Kurt Himstedt, who handed her an invoice for the food served at the spaghetti dinner.

"He said not to worry because this check has been taken care of," Morris said. "Mr. Dieterich was kind enough to pick up that bill for 300 and some dollars."

James Dieterich is the security officer for the Maud Abrams School.

The next delivery to families in need is scheduled for March 19.

The Rotary Club is sponsoring a spaghetti dinner from 4:30 to 8 p.m. March 14 at Uncle Bill's restaurant in North Cape May. Diners can eat in or take out their dinner. Tickets are \$14 for adults and \$7 for children. Samaniego said all proceeds will go to the Children's Dinner Fund. Tickets are available at Uncle Bill's.

Morris said K-Kids also raised \$1,000 and purchased a "buddy bench" on the Maud Abrams School playground.

"In keeping with Read Across America, I was thinking about the book, 'Oh, the places you will go,'" she said. "And oh, the places these kids will go and give back to their community."

Oleksiak-Hall asked K-Kids present at the school board meeting what they liked best about the spaghetti dinner.

"Eating with our families," a student replied.

The K-Kids program has been such a success at the Maud Abrams School that a group has been started at the Sandman Consolidated School, Samaniego said.

The school district conducted "Operation Shutdown," during the partial government shutdown last month. Food donations were sought from the community and a staff fundraiser was held.

Samaniego said more than 20 families were helped, with each family receiving 12 bags of groceries and \$55 cash. The operation took place during "Kindness Challenge Week," he said.

A Valentine's Day pretzel fundraiser at the Sandman School raised \$1,200 for the Children's Dinner Fund.

"Students dipped pretzel rods in milk chocolate and white chocolate for a great treat for a special friend," Samaniego said.

West Cape May awards its first restaurant liquor license ever

By **JOHN ALVAREZ**
 Special to the Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Borough Commission approved the issuance of a plenary retail consumption liquor license to West Cape Liquor LLC, also known as the Exit Zero Filling Station, for \$480,000.

During a meeting and public hearing Feb. 27, commission approved the first restaurant liquor license in the borough's history to be used at the Exit Zero Filling Station, a restaurant and gas station at 110 Sunset Blvd. that features Indian and Thai cuisines to go along with burgers, as well as breakfast and lunch bowls. The plan is to have many of the local distilleries represented, including beer from Cape May Brewing Co. and gin, rum and vodka from Nauti Spirits to make the place very local in every possible way.

Representing West Cape Liquor LLC was attorney Anthony Monzo and Jack Wright, owner of Exit Zero publications and managing member of West Cape Liquor.

In an opening statement,

Monzo thanked the commissioners for the patience for allowing West Cape Liquor time to structure its organization properly so it could comply with all regulations and to meet all conditions required for operation of a retail consumption license in West Cape May. Monzo said Detective Sgt. Joseph Walker, the Cape May Police Department's Alcohol Beverage Control officer, completed a background investigation with the state Alcohol Beverage Control Board and issued a favorable report.

Monzo said West Cape Liquor had satisfied all conditions in the zoning regulations and Wright was fully familiar with the ABC handbook as well as its regulations on how a restaurant bar and business is to be operated in West Cape May and will fully comply with those regulations.

Wright said a ribbon cutting ceremony would take place March 8.

Borough Clerk Suzanne Schumann said she would send the application along with the license fees in a resolution package to the ABC by mail the next day for their approval.

"Once they receive it, ABC can send us everything you need by email. We can then print you a license. They are just waiting for your resolution package to get there," Schumann said.

Mayor Carol Sabo wished West Cape Liquor good luck with the new venture.

"The license will make a huge difference for us," Wright said after the meeting. "It's historic. It's the first restaurant liquor license in the history of West Cape May. We look forward to serving our curries with chosen craft beers and wine to match. We are excited to offer something a little bit different."

A voter referendum in 2008 approved the sale of two licenses, one for a liquor store and one for a restaurant. The revenue from the sale of the licenses was to be used for tax relief.

A retail license was sold to Sunset Liquors in 2011 for \$615,000, resulting in a tax savings of \$50,000 for property owners in the 2013 tax year.

When Sunset Liquors opened in 2012, it ended 128 years of the borough being a dry town.

Castellucci

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cant decisions any school board would make.

"The superintendent should be the person and office through which the directions set by the board is carried out," he said.

Hooyman said the working relationship that develops between the board and the superintendent is absolutely critical and the selection of a superintendent provides the initial definition to that relationship.

A selection committee of the school board was assembled. He said current state regulations prevented three members from participating in the selection process.

The committee met over the past several months and

discussed a wide variety of topics, including the pros and cons of shared services and interim superintendents, reviewed the superintendent job description, reviewed the job posting and a community survey on the superintendent's position, Hooyman said.

He said the selection committee received 20 resumes for the position. The candidates were from the local area, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York, he said.

Selection committee members were provided copies of all resumes and asked to rank each candidate with regard to interest for an interview.

"Based upon the rankings, five candidates were selected for a formal inter-

view," Hooyman said.

Interviews of the five candidates were conducted Feb. 26-27. Kobik moderated the interviews for the committee. Hooyman said all of the candidates were asked the same series of questions and given ample time to answer. He said committee members recorded their remarks separately.

The committee had a lengthy discussion about the candidates Feb. 28 following the interviews. He said the committee voted unanimously to offer the job to Castellucci.

"I'm looking forward to this," Castellucci said. "This is something that I've thought about quite seriously during the last few months."