

# Suffolk Sports

## Champion commendation

Superintendent of Schools Alan Groverman and the members of the Connecticut Board of Education (BOE) visited the players and staff of the district's championship football team to its Dec. 9 meeting.

At that meeting, praise was heaped upon the players and their coaching staff for winning the Class I Long Island Football Championship, and for becoming a source of great pride for the Connecticut community.

The team arrived at the board meeting, located at the Syracuse Avenue School, in a parade that included fire trucks from the Babylon, Lakeland and West Nyack fire departments.

The team ended the season by defeating the Nassau County Champions, Prospect High School, by a score of 21-13 at Hofstra University on November 28. Coach Mike Hansen and Athletic Director Mary Lou Assante were honored for their leadership in bringing the first LI Championship to Connecticut since 1992. The Translators finished the season with an overall record of 11-2, earning Connecticut bragging rights until next year's championship game.

Congratulations to each member of the team, the coaching staff, and especially the families that provided the support to make 2008 a Championship season for the Connecticut community.

Members of the BOE from left in front are: President Michael Kealey, trustee James McLade, Vice President Stephen Barak, and trustees Charles Triolo and Leo Kennedy hold the championship trophies presented by coach Hansen and his team.

Photo by Joseph Masucci



## Sayville students at Frost Valley

Climbing Tower and Zip Lines were the order of the day as 208, eighth-graders from Sayville Middle School worked together to improve their teamwork and leadership skills during a trip to Frost Valley YMCA camp in the Catskills in Claryville, New York.

Sayville Middle School has been coming to Frost Valley for 23 years to take part in a retreat-style program aimed at increasing team building, building confidence and teaching students about the environment.

During the three-day overnight program, students hiked, tested themselves on the climbing tower, sharpened their orienteering skills, and completed their own food to foster leadership, cooperation and problem-solving, while learning about what they can do to keep the earth clean.

"It's probably one of the most important school events we do with the kids. It allows us the opportunity to address events and situations that would prevent kids from living their life now. Our school's 'Do your best now' campaign addressed these issues and the Frost Valley trip provided us with an exclusive forum outside the school setting to dedicate time to these goals," said Jim McLoughlin, one of the lead teachers from Sayville Middle School who attended the trip.

Providing hands-on and group experiences plays a key role in helping students to understand the context of group dynamics. By giving students the opportunity to get away from their pencils and desks to learn and work together in unique ways, they are able to make new connections socially and academically. For students who are not strong academically, experiences outside of the classroom give them a chance to shine, succeed and learn.

"The students get to work together and have fun at the same time, but then get time to reflect on the experience and realize that what they accomplished was not possible without a team effort and cooperation," said Christophe Colebrook, Frost Valley program instructor.

Frost Valley's group dynamics program is designed to help students build their interpersonal skills through fun, challenging and thought-provoking



Sayville Middle School students take part in the Spider Web exercise at Frost Valley YMCA as part of a traditional three-day trip to this Catskills recreational and educational center. Photo courtesy of Frost Valley

activities that reconnect them with nature.

"Our students get presented with problems — hands-on obstacles to overcome. They are required to think, listen, talk, try solutions and go back to the drawing board.

They get to do this with a group of peers and in a safe environment. While the students focus on the solutions, our staff guides the children through the process, teaching the communication and problem

solving skills needed to succeed. As they leave Frost Valley, they leave as better leaders and better team members," says Deb Eckharts, Frost Valley's director of School Trips Program.

Frost Valley YMCA is a premier education, recreation, and retreat center providing programming year-round for youth, school and business groups. For more information, please visit [www.frostvalley.org](http://www.frostvalley.org) or call 545-895-2281. ■