



The Long-Islander's.

www.LongIslanderNews.com

HALF HOLLOW HILLS

N · E · W · S · P · A · P · E · R

VOL. 6 NO. 44

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2002

2 SECTIONS, 28 PAGES

DIX HILLS

Raising A Village In One Day

By Tara Ennis

Dressed in business attire and with an air of professionalism, fifth graders from Signal Hill Elementary in Dix Hills entered the real world for a day when they ran Commerce Plaza. Based in Plainedge, Commerce Plaza is a simulated village that gives students the opportunity to play one of various roles, including mayor, real estate agent, bookkeeper and banker. Not only do they have to run the village, they have to turn a profit as well.

The curriculum for Commerce Plaza is taught ahead of time by trained teachers over a six week period — a total of 10 teachers are now qualified on how to coordinate students' roles at Commerce Plaza and oversee an efficient village. Since the inception of Commerce Plaza, fifth graders from Half Hollow Hills elementary schools — Chestnut Hill, Forest Park, Otsego, Paumanok, Sunquam, and Vanderbilt — have participated.

At Commerce Plaza students are involved in all areas — banking, advertising, overseeing LIPA, communicating with the mayor and town hall, creating the village newspaper, selling and buying real estate, and running a wellness center. They learn how to build a business from scratch — setting up phones, monitoring a warehouse, and making a profit. Though profit is important, the students learn that giving to charity is equally important and donate money to a United Way in the village.

Lunchtime is not exactly a time to take a break. Students receive paychecks and allocate a certain amount of money to the



Fifth graders from Signal Hill Elementary in Dix Hills dressed in their business attire to run Commerce Plaza for the day, a simulated village where students oversee every aspect including town hall, a newspaper, and real estate.

HHH Photo/Christopher Koutsis

bank after cashing their checks. A portion of the remaining money is used to eat at a student-run McDonalds.

Donna Levy, Half Hollow Hills school-to-career liaison, said the professionally run Commerce Plaza highlights academic skills, particularly mathematics, and makes

it real. The students, she said, "just love it." Feedback that Levy has received from parents supports that sentiment.

One parent said her child chose her Commerce Plaza business outfit two weeks ahead of time, and another parent said her child wants to write her personal checks now.

There is, however, one complaint about running a village. When Levy asked what they needed more of at Commerce Plaza, the students shared response was, "more time." For Levy, that was a sure sign these students had a true taste of the real world.