



Week of December 17, 2018

From The Desk of Mayor Don Ryan

December 21 marks the first official day of winter but rather than focus on the cold weather that lies ahead I know most of us are more focused and excited about celebrating Christmas just around the corner.

Christmas welcomes the birth of Christ and is important for children to understand the significance of this miraculous event. Before opening gifts perhaps you could retell the story of the nativity and share the journey of the three wise men's visit to the baby Jesus, prior to indulging in all the wonderful festivities you have planned. The holiday will be more fulfilling if you reflect on the spirit of what Christmas truly represents. I also urge you to attend one of the special church services being held at our many houses of worship in Hempstead on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

On the day after Christmas, December 26, our Kwanzaa celebration will be held at 6:30 p.m. at Kennedy Memorial Park (335 Greenwich St.) Kwanzaa recognizes culture and achievements through music and offers valuable lessons to children. Kwanzaa teachings are based upon positive social values as a way for betterment of society and are expressed through seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective work, responsibility, purpose, creativity and faith. This year's event, held in conjunction with Operation Get Ahead, will feature the lighting of the traditional Kinara, ceremonial singing and readings and complimentary refreshments for all who attend.

The Village will also be hosting a Three Kings event on Friday, January 4, 2019 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Kennedy Memorial Park (335 Greenwich Street). This celebration recognizes the three Kings or Magi who traveled thousands of miles to visit and worship Jesus after his birth bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

In addition, I wanted to inform residents about several Tax Grievance Workshops the Village will be hosting in early January. The seminars will take place on:

- Thursday, Jan. 3, at Hempstead Public Library (115 James A. Garner Way) from 6-7:30 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 7, at United Methodist Church (Hempstead Senior Center, 40 Washington St.) from 1-2 p.m.
- Wednesday, Jan. 9, at Kennedy Memorial Park (335 Greenwich Street) from 12-1 p.m.

These seminars offer a great opportunity for any resident interested in learning the steps to file a tax grievance, including the process of property valuation and how to file an appeal on the assessed value of your property. Filing is free and members from the Village's Department of Assessment will be on hand to answer questions and provide useful information, including all the necessary applications should you decide to submit a tax grievance. This year's filing period runs from February 1 through February 19. For more information call 516-489-3400 or visit the Village website at www.villageofhempstead.org

My very best wishes to all of you for a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and safe New Year!

This Week's Best of Hempstead



Thomas Sapp receives the honors as this week's Best of Hempstead. Originally from Hollis, Queens, Thomas moved to Hempstead Village as an 11-year old back in 1976 and has lived here ever since. I first met Thomas as a 12-year old while coaching him in basketball and had the privilege of watching him develop into a fine young man before and after he graduated from Hempstead High School in 1985.

Thomas's life changed dramatically back in December of 2007 when his son Kareem was murdered in Uniondale while doing a favor for a friend. Frustrated with the slow progress in the ensuing investigation, Thomas formed the Kareem D. Sapp Foundation in his son's name and through a series of protests and rallies helped bring his son's murderer to justice. Since then the organization has helped support other families with similar experiences on

Long Island as well as the surrounding five boroughs of NYC. Those efforts have often helped galvanize and unite citizens, activists, church leaders, and law enforcement agencies to take action to stem the tide of violence against our youth.

For the past four years the organization has hosted the Feast of Giving, an event that helps men, women and children in need. This year, the Feast of Giving was held at Union Baptist Church where more than 300 local residents enjoyed a hot buffet, entertainment and gifts along with warm winter coats, clothing and food for those who attended.

Through its Freedom Series, the organization coordinates anti-gang/anti-violence programs in high schools throughout the area that encourages educators from each locale to work directly with their own students concerning these important topics. About twice a year, the Kareem D. Sapp Foundation pays tribute to community and spiritual leaders during musical performances featuring accomplished artists in the gospel, hip-hop, classical soul genres. Plans are currently underway to host the next show in March 2019 at the African American Museum here in Hempstead.

Thomas, you are an amazing individual who has channeled the hurt and pain you have experienced from a personal tragedy and turned it into a positive mission that has helped countless men, women and children in a variety of ways. It gives me great pleasure to recognize you as one of Hempstead's best. Congratulations.

Sincerely,

Don

Don Ryan
Mayor of the Incorporated Village of Hempstead