

Superintendent's Highlight of the Week March 16, 2018

This week our POB JFKHS students turned the tables on us to teach us a valuable lesson in civic engagement. Like so many students around this country they were touched by the terrible tragedy that took at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14th and responded with a call to action. The student leaders Julia Limmer, Brianna Mejia, Kiana Ziadkhanpour, Safia Mirza, Matthew Wolson, Lara Goodman, Genna Knoll and Jordan Rosner thoughtfully and with utmost respect organized a moving tribute to memorialize the lives lost that day.



The ceremony, which lasted 17 minutes, one minute for each precious life lost, started with the Pledge of Allegiance. Jordan then asked the crowd to reflect upon the reality faced by those in Parkland. Imagining a world without a best friend, coach, or favorite teacher added a sense of weight and reality to the crisp winter morning. Genna and Lara recounted the events of that fateful day and highlighted the shared ties that bind Parkland and Plainview together. Next, Matt stood up to speak about a renewed vigor among high school students across the country who have taken from this tragedy a drive to speak out for the promotion of a safer United States. This was followed by Safia taking the podium to read a poem written by one of the victims shortly prior to the shooting. With every student engaged, Brianna, Kianna and Julia read the names along with a brief description of each victim as an orange balloon was raised to fly alongside the podium. Each description, though too short to reflect the true loss of each life, was a somber reminder that the stories ended by the shooting are the same as ours which go on. Finally, Julia led a moment of silence; and, except the birds in the background, not a sound was heard among the hundreds of students with heads bowed in respect.

The ceremony ended optimistically, as the student community was called to remember the kindness and unity that grows here in Plainview-Old Bethpage. Holding up their hands in the shape of a heart, the students pledged 17 acts of kindness to impart on others over the upcoming days. They walked away with a sense of pride and purpose, with a deeper understanding that they have power, and with that power, the ability to create a better world.

