

FIRST IN NEWSDAY

## 'NO LONGER UNDERDOGS'

Hempstead high, middle schools elevated to academic good standing after decades

A6-7



RICK KOPSTEIN

## OUT OF THIS WORLD!

NASA astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli comes home to Baldwin to visit students

A8 | VIDEO AT NEWSDAY.TV

# BANK FAILURES

Biden: Americans can 'have confidence' system is safe

Hochul: I acted on NY's Signature Bank after it bled deposits

Shares of regional banks on LI, elsewhere drop sharply

A2-4 | VIDEO AT NEWSDAY.TV



MARCUS SANTOS

Employees work with a customer at a Signature Bank location in Manhattan on Monday.

## AIRTRAIN

Hochul spikes \$2B link from LaGuardia Airport to LIRR A5

## SENTENCING

Man who stabbed, nearly killed Suffolk cop gets 16 years A6



# ASTRONAUT TELLS LI KIDS TO DREAM BIG

Inspires students in her old school to set sights high

BY TIFFANY CUSAAC-SMITH

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Long before she was tapped to lead a team of fellow NASA astronauts into space, Jasmin Moghbeli was a Long Island sixth-grader at Lenox Elementary School in Baldwin who knew her dreams were among the stars.

Moghbeli will be living those dreams in a few months when she serves as spacecraft commander for a SpaceX Crew-7 mission to the International Space Station. But Monday, Moghbeli was back walking the Lenox halls she had traversed so many years ago, this time encouraging students to see her story as proof that working hard can lead them to achieve their dreams.

"I want them to see I went to the same school," Moghbeli said.

She added: "And now I'm here and they can do [it] as well."

At Lenox, she talked with students about the importance of community, space travel and how to be an astronaut. Students created rockets made from balloons, tape, straws and

strings. They tabulated which rocket went the fastest.

## An inspiration

Gabrielle Reid, 10, who made one of the fastest rockets, said Moghbeli was an inspiration.

"It feels pretty awesome that she is going into space. It feels really cool that she's sharing her life with us," Gabrielle said.

Julius Castillo, also 10, wants to be the second Lenox student into space as an astronaut. Meeting Moghbeli confirmed to him it's possible.

"I can follow my dream like she did" Julius said, looking over at a plaque with two pictures: one showing Moghbeli in elementary school next to another of her as an astronaut.

"See that poster over there?" he said. "That's her when she was in school and that's her right now."

For Moghbeli, a book report on Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova — who, in 1963, was the first woman to go to space — was the launchpad for the sixth-grader.

For the report, she and her mother created a makeshift astronaut costume, assembled using a "white windbreaker, winter boots and a plastic container for the helmet," Newsday has reported.

On Monday, her mother, Fereshteh Moghbeli, was also



NASA astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli, right, with 11th-grader Katlyn Scott. ■ Video: [newsday.com/longisland](https://newsday.com/longisland)



Astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli, a Lenox Elementary alumna, returned to her Baldwin school.

back at Lenox, watching her daughter in amazement as the astronaut spoke with the young students.

"Just being back here is amazing and watching her talk to the kids is really some experience that I couldn't even express how it is," she said of her daughter's

visit to Lenox, adding later: "It's really something surreal that she actually got to where she is."

Her mother said it was a combination of determination and serendipity.

Born in Germany, Jasmin Moghbeli was the child of immigrants who fled Iran after the country's 1979 revolution. The family eventually chose to come to Baldwin.

## Dreams of space exploration

As she continued to kindle her dreams of space exploration, Moghbeli excelled academically and played basketball and lacrosse at Baldwin High School, where she also visited Monday. But Moghbeli said it wasn't always easy and some subjects, such as history, did not come with the same ease as mathematics.

Moghbeli later got her bachelor's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, followed by a master's in aerospace engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School

in California. Moghbeli then became an AH-1W Super Cobra pilot and Marine Corps test pilot, logging in more than 150 combat missions.

In 2020, she graduated from NASA's astronaut school, making her among around a dozen chosen from 18,000 applicants.

In a few months, those years of hard work will be on full display when she becomes commander of the mission to the space station. She'll be in space for six months.

Still, Moghbeli said, sometimes it feels unreal to even her.

"I still wake up and go, 'I can't believe that I'm actually a NASA astronaut,'" Moghbeli said.

But even with her achievements, Moghbeli keeps her alma mater close. When she goes into space, three Lenox items will be among the roughly shoebox-sized personal items she's allowed to carry — a "Lenox strong" bracelet, a pin about Lenox pride and a drawing from a school fifth-grader.

# Ukrainians who fled war can remain in U.S.

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is allowing thousands of Ukrainians who fled their homeland when

Russia invaded it over a year ago to stay in the United States longer, the administration said Monday. The decision provides relief to Ukrainians whose one-year authorization to remain in the United States was set to expire soon.

The Homeland Security Department said the extension is

for certain Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members who were let into the United States before the Uniting for Ukraine program started.

Ukrainians who came in under the Uniting for Ukraine program generally got two years of humanitarian "parole"

in the United States whereas those who arrived before them generally got permission to stay only for one year.

Thousands of Ukrainians came to America last year fleeing the war.

The U.S. government used a program called humanitarian parole to admit them into the

country. Humanitarian parole is a way to allow people from other countries to enter the United States on an emergency basis due to an urgent humanitarian situation. But it is usually for a finite amount of time, like a year or two years, and must be renewed for people to stay longer. — AP

RUSSIA EXTENDS UKRAINE GRAIN EXPORTATION A19