

Sign dedication keeps Hyde Park history alive

A new roadside historical marker recognizing Haviland Middle School's designation as a historic place by the National Park Service was unveiled Oct. 5 during a brief ceremony.

The idea to recognize Haviland, which was the district's original high school, came from an unlikely source – Arlington High School history teacher Robert McHugh and his students, now seniors, Emma Galarza and Sophia Keenaghan. They spent the end of last school year working on a grant application to the Pomeroy Foundation, which awards grants in New York State to community groups who desire to install historic markers.

The school has a building marker from when it received National Park Service Certification on Jan. 7, 2011.

But this new marker is more visible.

Galarza enjoyed working on this initiative which included her and Keenaghan gathering primary source documentation about the site, obtaining permission from the landowner to erect a marker and asking the foundation to fund one because of the site being on the National Register of Historic Places.

"I'm really honored to have a historic marker here," Galarza said. "It means a lot to recognize history in our local community."

When Superintendent Dr. Pedro Roman first heard of McHugh and his students wanting to honor Haviland, he was happy to see that they participated in a service project that expanded their understanding of local history.

"For you to help us amplify the rich history that we have in our community and to inspire others to learn more about that is truly gratifying and much appreciated," Roman said to the students. "The enduring hope and promise of education continues to illuminate."

Jeff Urbin, education specialist for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, noted that when President Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt first dedicated the school Oct. 5, 1940 it was significant as they believed in education and viewed schools as places for students and staff to share ideas and grow together as they looked ahead. Urbin added that the president would have been proud of the students' efforts.

"When he dedicated this school, it was really an investment in the future, it was an investment in young folks," Urbin said of President Roosevelt. "No matter how bad things were, the Roosevelts always envisioned that better place and then worked to build pathways to that."