It's Elementary

VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN

SUMMER 2021

Congratulations to All Students Who 'Moved-Up' This Year!

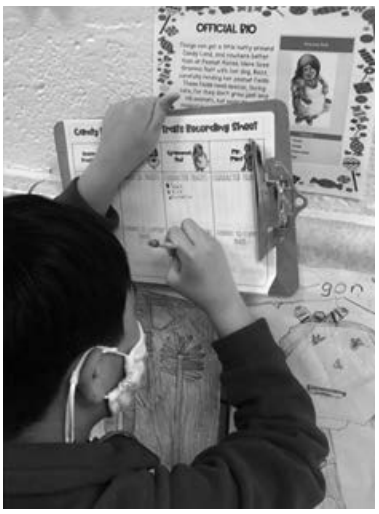
For photos from each of our four moving up ceremonies, please visit the Valley Stream UFSD 13 District website at www.valleystream13.com.

After a Difficult Year, We'd Like to Say Thank You

The 2020-2021 school year was a challenge for every school district in every community in America. On behalf of the Board of Education, the administration, and all our faculty and staff, the Valley Stream UFSD 13 would like to say to the community: Thank you. Because of your perseverance, patience, and tenacity—and thanks to the incredible, hard work of our facilities staff, teachers, and personnel—we never had to shut down our school buildings due to a COVID-19 incident this year. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. We look forward to next year.

Checking in Around the District

CLASSROOMS TRANSFORMED INTO CLASSIC CHILDREN'S GAME TO TEACH ELA CONCEPTS



This spring, fourth graders at the Willow Road Elementary School and fifth graders at the Howell Road School participated in a *Candy Land*-themed ELA review day as students were then in the midst of preparing for their upcoming state assessments.

Valley Stream's teachers transformed sections of their classrooms into locations found on the classic *Candy Land* game board. In the classroom's representation of the old "Peppermint Forest" found on the board game, for example, children read about the real-life development of the *Candy Land* game. In the "Cupcake Castle," students identified text structure, and in the "Licorice Castle," children reviewed character traits after reading the official bios of the residents of Candy Land. The students were able to collaborate with one another using their Chromebooks to answer questions and concluded the day by playing a modified version of *Candy Land.* Overall, it was a fun, inventive way to teach critical ELA concepts.

CULTIVATING A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS

The Valley Stream UFSD 13 is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and is actively working to create a districtwide culture of dignity with a climate of belonging in our schools. One important aspect of this is the implementation of a Culturally Responsive–Sustaining Education (CR-S). CR-S Education is grounded in a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple expressions of diversity—race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ability—are recognized and regarded as assets for teaching and learning.

The District has continued implementing CR-S by helping educators create student-centered learning environments that affirm racial, linguistic, and cultural identities; preparing students for rigor and independent learning; developing students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevating historically marginalized voices; and empowering students as agents of social change.

Students at James A. Dever Elementary School read together about different cultures and backgrounds.

"Our District has created an academically rigorous and intellectually challenging environment, while also taking into consideration the various ways students learn," said Superintendent Dr. Constance D. Evelyn. "Over the past few years, and even now despite the pandemic, we have continued to have great success with celebrating diversity and inclusion in our schools."

VALLEY STREAM STUDENT ARTWORK IS 'DRAW'-DROPPING!

In May, Valley Stream UFSD 13 held a virtual Board of Education Commendation Ceremony to celebrate student achievement in art. The District's Art Department recognized the students that participated in the New York State Art Teachers Association (NYSATA) Student Art Exhibit. The following students were commended: Ryan Stevens, grade 2; Isaac Roberts, grade 2; Omar Iqbal, grade 2; Anthony Ramirez, grade 6; Davina Somerville, grade 5; Nizar Saoud, grade 6; Gabriella Basile, grade 5; Isabella de los Santos, grade 2; Lorenzo Centore, grade 1; Victoria DeOliveria, grade 2; Kyla Washington, grade 2; and Yaelle Pierre, grade K.

Students were also recognized for the work chosen to be displayed at the 31st Annual Legislative Student Art Exhibit, that was held virtually due to the pandemic. The following students had their work featured: Kaylie Soto, grade K; Julian Melendez, grade K; Aya Bosaka-Stewart, grade 3; Aurelia Bahadar, grade 2; Bristal Lindsay, grade 3; Ava Roman, grade 3; Hamna Adrees, grade 6; Shariq Khan, grade 5; Mohammed Arshad, grade 6; and Herwinder Multani, grade 6.

Alexandra Nanavrakis, grade 4, James A. Dever School

Nizar Saoud, grade 6, Wheeler Avenue School

Shariq Khan, grade 5, Howell Road School

Mikayla Aziz, grade 6, Howell Road School

Several students were commended for participating in the 17th Annual Art Supervisors Association All-County Art Exhibit: Muzzamil Shehzad, grade 6; Mikayla Aziz, grade 6; Manraj Singh, grade 2; Julian Melendez, grade K; Kaylie Soto, grade K; Journie Nembhard, grade K; Joseph Lentini, grade 6; Mia Graine, grade 6; Simardeep Kaur, grade 6; Joanna Joseph, grade 6; Aila Ahmed, grade 6; Natalie Sammarco, grade 4; Alexandra Nanavrakis, grade 4; and Austin Snyder, grade 4.

Finally, several remote students were selected to earn the "Remote Art Achievement Award." The following students were awarded: Steven Santiago, grade 6; Alessia Surdich, grade 6; and Aliyah Fajardo, grade 5.

CONGRATS TO SOME OF VALLEY STREAM'S FINEST

We'd like to congratulate three amazing members of the Valley Stream UFSD 13 family who were recently recognized for their contributions to our school district. Dever Elementary School first grade teacher Debora O'Connor was recognized for her 35 years of service to the District and 50 years of service as a member of the Girl Scouts. Kristina Karouzakis, Willow Road School speech therapist, was commended for her determination and perseverance in attaining and creating opportunities for Willow students. Additionally, Andrea DiMango, District Director of Instructional Technology and Innovation, was honored for being a "COVID Technology Warrior," ensuring critical success of remote learners and the District's Reopening Plan. Congratulations to Debora, Kristina, and Andrea! You make our District proud.

TO THE VALLEY STREAM UFSD 13 COMMUNITY:

Have a great rest of your summer! See you in the fall!

Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen
585 North Corona Avenue
Valley Stream, New York 11580-2099
516-568-6100 • www.valleystream13.com

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HOW'S YOUR SUMMER READING GOING? TRACK YOUR BOOKS HERE!

Nothing beats the combination of a good book and a nice summer day! And there's still plenty of time to read new books this summer or track the books you've already finished. Use the chart below to keep track of the books you've read so far and add new books as you finish them. **In September, bring your log back to your classroom teacher.** Happy reading!

VALLEY STREAM 13 SUMMER READING LOG

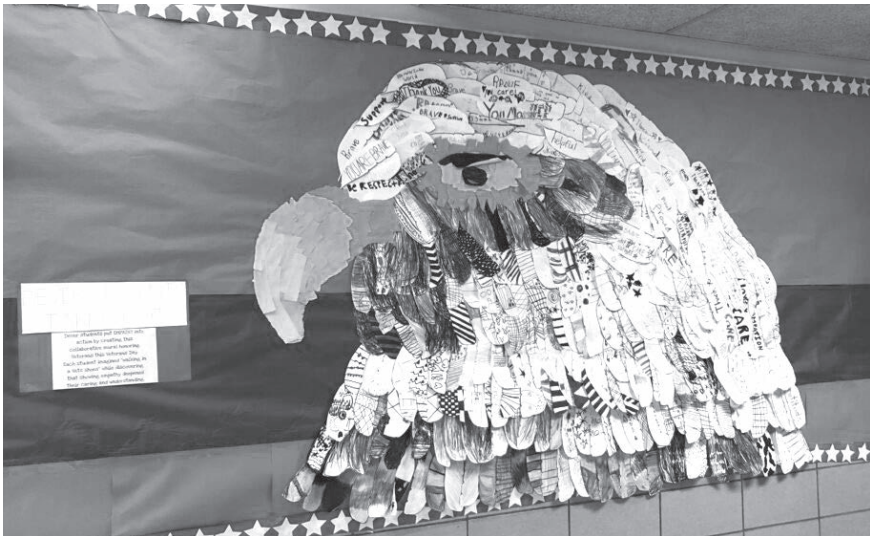
BOOK	AUTHOR
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
NAME _____	CLASS _____

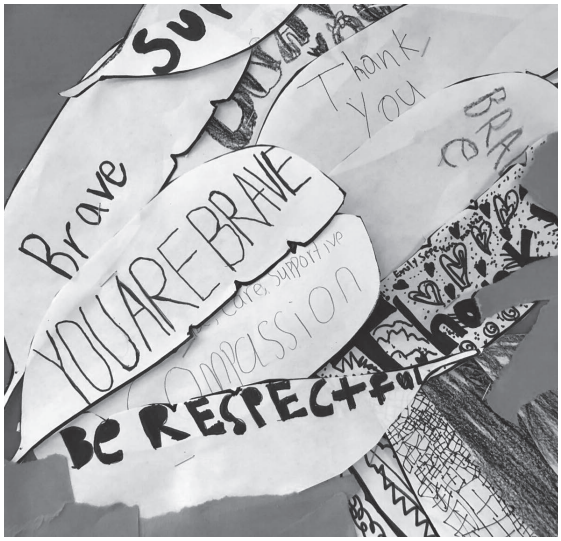
It's Elementary

VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN

WINTER 2021

Student-Made Mural a Reminder of Sacrifices Made by Veterans





Art is taught in schools all over the world for many reasons. One of the most important is art education's ability to foster empathy and understanding. Last fall, art educator and District Coordinator of Fine Arts Janis Boremski incorporated November's character trait, empathy, into her student curriculum at Dever Elementary School. She found the perfect way to do it, which was by having students create a beautiful Veterans Day bald eagle display.

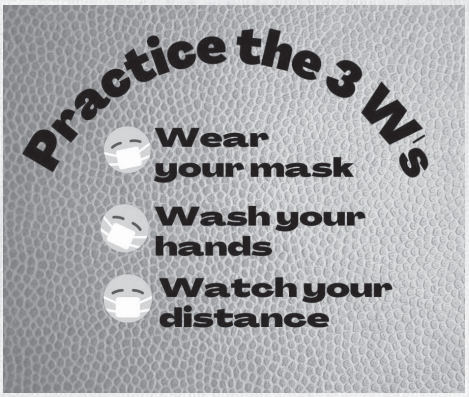
Students at Dever have been striving to put themselves in someone else's shoes as a way to learn empathy. The mural project was a natural extension of that work, forcing students to take a moment to consider what it would be like to make such an immense sacrifice for their country. The beautiful mural, which includes messages written by the students, will stay up in the halls of Dever as a reminder of the sacrifices veterans make and as an emblem of empathy.

Enhancing creativity while teaching valuable character traits directly aligns with the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen's belief that social and emotional intelligence is essential to effective teaching and learning, sound decision making, physical and mental health and success in school and beyond.

We are proud to honor those Americans who sacrifice so much for our country.

> *"There are many Veteran empathy projects nationwide. Showing empathy—as opposed to simply honoring our vets—is found to have a better impact on Veterans reintegrating into life after serving in our armed forces."*
>
> - District Art Coordinator Janis Boremski

A letter from the Superintendent



The calendar may read 2021, however, in many ways we are still impacted by the remarkable events of 2020. The pandemic that uprooted our lives in March of last year carries on, and we remain vigilant in keeping our students, families, and staff safe. I would like to praise and thank our teachers, staff, faculty, and building and grounds crew of Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen. These men and women are essential by every definition of this word. And because of their diligence and dedication to our safety protocols, we have not had to shut down any school due to the pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year. Their actions are truly heroic.

Despite the trials of COVID, much of school life at Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen has progressed in ways that continue to critically support students and families. Our students continue to learn, grow, and achieve at high levels. Our teachers have persisted in finding new ways to engage our children that are stimulating and thoughtful, and they have truly reinvigorated our curricular offerings. Our facilities staff has also continued to make progress in their Herculean efforts to keep our schools clean and adaptable to this unique era in public education.

Of course, the other part of this equation is you, the community. You have been our critical partner in this challenge since day one, and we are grateful for your committed support. We humbly respect how much time it takes to keep up this level of engagement, and we encourage you to stay in touch with us utilizing the many upcoming opportunities. Follow us on social media and our website and participate in ThoughtExchanges. And please be sure to stay up to date on our proposed budget this spring to inform your vote in May.

We are all in this together.

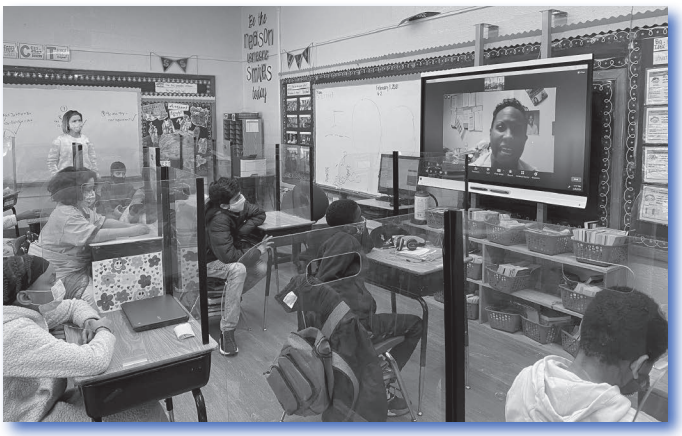
Sincerely,

Constance D. Evelyn, Ed.D., *Superintendent of Schools*

Checking in Around the District

HEART HEALTHY AND HEART SMART AT HOWELL ROAD

Alexis Reyes, a nurse at LIJ Forrest Hills, recently gave a vital virtual lesson to students at Howell Road Elementary School. Ms. Reyes taught students about the function of the heart, what it does for our body, and why it so important to be heart healthy. Her presentation included two x-ray examples—one of a healthy heart and one of a damaged heart—for the students to study. Perhaps the most important part of the presentation occurred when Nurse Reyes elaborated on the x-ray of the damaged heart. She pointed out the specific differences in the two x-rays and explained what caused the visible damage. This led into a conversation about the damaging effects of smoking tobacco and nicotine products—including cigarettes, cigars, vapes and e-cigarettes. In addition to talking about the terrible consequences for the heart, Ms. Reyes also mentioned how smoking can lead to cancer, bad breath, wrinkled skin, yellow teeth, and elimination from physical activities of all kinds.



Lesson topics don't get much more important than heart health, and we're so thankful Alexis Reyes stopped by to deliver this vital presentation!

WHEELER AVENUE STUDENTS TAKE PART IN THE 'TIN FOIL CHALLENGE'

Recently, students at Wheeler Avenue Elementary School busted out the tin foil, but they weren't making cookies! They were actually participating in a challenging STEM-based learning activity. Fifth grade students in Mrs. L'Heureux's class participated in an engaging STEM experiment to understand the basics of the engineering design process. Students were given the challenge of building the tallest freestanding tower possible, with one catch—they were only allowed to use tin foil, not the roll or the box it came in; the tower had to stand on its own!

Students learned several valuable lessons throughout the project, not the least of which was the wider the base, the more stable the tower. At the end of the time given, Mrs. L'Heureux measured each tower and combined the heights. The goal was to be in the row of desks with the tallest combined tower height. After individually measuring the freestanding towers, Mrs. L'Heureux wrote the measurements on the board by row, so students could add their row up to determine the winning row. The winners had a total tower height of 139 ¼ inches. Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen continuously seeks to incorporate STEM into daily curriculum so that students can develop investigative, and creative skills that they can use in all areas of their lives.

AT WILLOW ROAD, KINDNESS IS KEY

During difficult times, kindness is more vital than ever. Certainly this is a truism that the students of Willow Road Elementary School know well, as they just embarked on The Great Kindness Challenge. Featuring daily celebrations and many acts of kindness—and organized through the efforts of District staff Michelle Lepe and Jamey Schecter—The Great Kindness Challenge spread kindness throughout the halls of Willow Road!

The week was highlighted by many different activities. Team Willow enjoyed dressing in a variety of themes—for example, a rock star, because "kindness rocks." Students received a kind acts checklist and were encouraged to complete the list. During morning meetings, classes reflected on the meaning of kindness. There were discussions about how showing kindness to all—whether in school, home or in the community—makes the world a more peaceful place. Additionally, students spread kindness throughout the building by posting notes of thanks and appreciation on doors for others. The Great Kindness Challenge highlighted our established norm of embracing a culture of kindness and compassion.

SNOW DAYS SHOULD STAY

In early February, a major winter storm hit the Tri-State area. One of the most significant snowstorms to hit the New York region in years, the storm pounded parts of Long Island with over a foot of snow. Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen, like districts all over the northeast, closed for a traditional snow day. We did this because we believe that snow days are a vital rite of passage for young students, whether they are in school buildings or learning at home.

So much emphasis has been placed on caring for our mental health as we all navigate this terrible pandemic. We must not lose sight of the fact that the mental health of our youngest children is paramount. While we are all cognizant of the importance of schooling and we must strive to make sure educational loss is minimized, kids need a chance to be kids. They need a break. They need to run around in the snow and laugh and build snowmen and—if only for a brief moment—forget that so much about the world has changed forever. We hope each of you took a moment to enjoy the beautiful snow with your loved ones.

A student from Wheeler plays in the snow during a recent storm.

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For the Environment—and our Bottom Line—Solar Power is a No Brainer

There are so many reasons for a school district to engage with solar power. First and foremost, a shift to solar power greatly reduces a district's carbon footprint, a crucial factor in counterbalancing the negative effects of climate change. Additionally, solar energy has the potential to greatly reduce a district's overall energy budget, also a critical need as we face an uncertain and potentially challenging economic future.

For these reasons—and, indeed, many more—the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen entered into an energy performance contract with Honeywell Building Solutions in January of 2017. This energy performance contract provided Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen with a unique method of obtaining the latest energy-saving technology without having to frontload or bond the costs of those energy-saving systems.

The benefits of this initiative are becoming clear. Our payment plan for the installed system is set at 15 years. However, these devices have a lifespan that stretches beyond the 15-year payment window. Therefore, when the plan is over, Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen will begin to capture significant energy savings and generate additional positive cash flow.

Already we are beginning to see savings. According to a report provided by Honeywell, the District's estimated energy cost savings for the year 1 period are $275,246, which equates to a savings of 28.26 percent.

Finances are not the only benefit; there are untold benefits for the environment from switching to solar. "We're huge proponents of reducing our carbon footprint," said Dr. Constance Evelyn, Superintendent of Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen. "Our District's commitment to energy conservation focuses not only on energy cost savings for the taxpayer, but also on integrating sustainability into student learning for future generations."

Valley Stream Union Free School District 13 · Where Children Come First

It's Elementary

Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen

WINTER 2021-2022

CONTINUITY AT THE TOP

District Bids Adieu to Dr. Constance Evelyn; Celebrates Dr. Judith LaRocca's Promotion as New Superintendent

It's a time of transition at Valley Stream UFSD 13. We are saying goodbye to a beloved, historic superintendent and celebrating as a member of the Valley Stream administration is elevated to the position of our new superintendent.

On January 14, Dr. Constance Evelyn retired, ending a tenure marked by historic firsts for the District; one that leaves our children and educators poised to meet the needs of the next generation.

After coming to Valley Stream UFSD 13 in late 2015, where she served as our first-ever Black superintendent, Dr. Evelyn quickly got to work. Within six months, she spearheaded a successful bond referendum—the first in District history—for $32 million. The funds generated through the bond allowed for a District-wide transformation, including roof replacements, solar panel installations, door replacements, classroom redesigns, expansion of school lunchroom kitchen facilities, bathroom refurbishments, air conditioning in every classroom, and a first-floor cafeteria at the Wheeler Avenue Elementary School, among many more.

For her success, Dr. Evelyn credits the connections she made with members of the school community, without whose support it would not have been possible. "I immediately set out to build relationships," she said. "Meaningful relationships with the school community; the Board; the people who work here; and, of course, students and their families."

During her tenure, Dr. Evelyn built a solid, hard-working team under her that ably guided the District through difficult times, such as the pandemic and resultant economic hardships. Some of her hires included Gerard Antoine as assistant superintendent for business and human resources and incoming superintendent Dr. Judith LaRocca as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

Additionally, Dr. Evelyn sought to establish an updated core curriculum, and build its capacity to serve the ever-evolving needs of students. Part of that effort included hiring District 13's first-ever Director of Technology, Andrea DiMango. Ms. DiMango commented on Dr. Evelyn's leadership qualities, particularly her ability to build a team and delegate important tasks.

Continued on page 2

CONTINUITY AT THE TOP, CONTINUED

"What I respect so much about Dr. Evelyn is that she understands that good leadership does not mean being involved on a granular level in each and every process," she said. "She understands that you can bring a team together of people who are talented in their own ways and they share a vision of excellence."

Dr. Evelyn's focus on creating a good team to lead Valley Stream UFSD 13 has led to a remarkably seamless transition process that ensures that the education students receive is in no way affected by the change in leadership.

"We've worked very closely over the past six years, and I think the community will benefit from having the continuity of leadership through this process," Dr. LaRocca said of the transition.

Incoming Superintendent Dr. Judith LaRocca (second from left) stands alongside outgoing Superintendent Dr. Constance Evelyn (second from right) and Valley Stream administrators Gerard Antoine (left) and Andrea DiMango (right).

As she prepares to take the reins of Valley Stream UFSD 13, Dr. LaRocca says she is eager to expand on the educational foundation they built together over the past six years.

Dr. LaRocca got her start in education as a middle school math teacher for the Massapequa School District in 1996. In 2003, she entered her first administrative role as a staff developer and shared data expert for Eastern Suffolk BOCES, during which time she earned her degree in school district administration from Stony Brook University. In 2007, she was brought on as Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology for the New Hyde Park-Garden City Park Union Free School District, where she oversaw the District's curriculum, testing, professional development, data management and technology infrastructure.

Finally, in 2016, Dr. Evelyn handpicked her to serve on her team as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for District 13.

"I was struck by her many years of experience, both teaching and in administrative roles," Dr. Evelyn said. "She was Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology at New Hyde Park Schools, and I noticed that over time she had been given more and more responsibility in that role. That made her a very attractive candidate, and I needed someone who could hit the ground running."

Together, Dr. Evelyn and Dr. LaRocca updated District 13's core curriculum, and established infrastructure to ensure the continued evolution of its programs. Additionally, they spearheaded the implementation of STEM into all subject areas through community partnerships with nonprofit organizations like Crossroads Farm in Malverne and the establishment of learning lab facilities in each of the District's school buildings.

Dr. LaRocca said she has also made a major push to diversify District staff, achieving an average 33 percent diversity faculty hiring rate from 2017 to 2021, with a 46 percent rate in 2019. In 2014, District 13 had five BIPOC faculty members. In 2021 there are 19.

Looking to the future, Dr. LaRocca said her priorities are to finish the capital improvements made possible through District 13's $35 million bond passed in 2015, including the construction of a new music wing at the James A. Dever Elementary School. Additionally, she said she hopes to continue the District's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, as well as those to boost communication with the District community.

"We are thrilled to have Dr. LaRocca as our next Superintendent of Schools," said Dr. Frank Chiachiere, President of the Valley Stream 13 Board of Education. "We strongly believe Dr. LaRocca is the perfect person to help us build on the solid foundation that has been developed in our District over the past six years."

Looking to District 13's future after her departure, Dr. Evelyn said she hopes her successors continue preparing students for the ever-changing challenges of the professional world, and giving them opportunities to pursue their interests, whatever they may be.

"I hope that they continue the work around protecting the dignity of everyone in our building, and, generally speaking, making sure that our kids always feel valued and loved when they walk in the door and when they leave and get on the bus," she said. "Everyone should feel valued and loved."

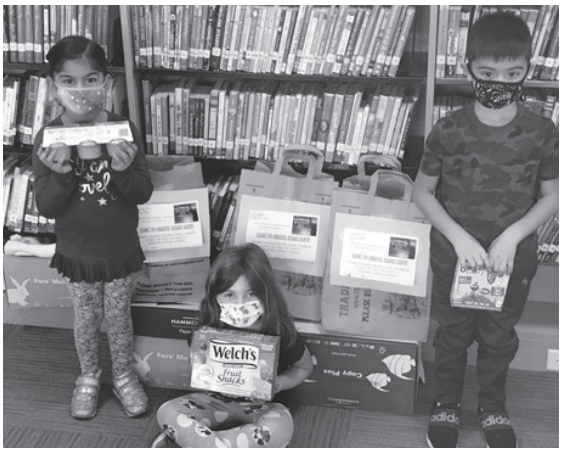
Family Day Highlights American Education Week

Throughout the month of November, Valley Stream UFSD 13 celebrated American Education Week. Classrooms in every school in our District participated in events that paid homage to educators and shone a spotlight on the need to ensure quality education for every student in the country.

One highlight of the event was Family Day, a virtual event at which parents were invited to virtually attend a day in the life of their children in school. In many of the classrooms, parents engaged with their children during STEAM—Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics—activities. In other classrooms, parents learned about their children's writing skills during writer's workshops. And in many of the kindergarten classes throughout the district, parents virtually participated in Thanksgiving-related activities

Parent and guardian involvement is a critical part of the education process. Multifaceted events such as American Education Week allow parents and guardians to experience what school is like for their children, which fosters appreciation and understanding of the intrinsic value of public education.

Willow Road Gives Back



At Willow Road Elementary School, giving back to the community is an important responsibility. As is tradition, students in the school generously donated healthy snacks this fall to help local families in need. Healthy food snack items such as juice boxes, single-serve cereal, granola bars, peanut butter snack cups, and chips were collected. The choice to donate snacks was a deliberate one; often food programs do not cover snack foods, but children still want to enjoy fun options in their lunches. Healthy snacks provide the perfect solution. Ultimately, over 20 boxes and bags of food were collected and donated to the Interfaith Nutrition Network (INN) in Hempstead. Thank you to the students of Willow for your efforts and compassion. Their spirit of generosity—the obligation they feel to help their community—serves as a lesson for us all.

Clean Air, Safer Schools

How State-of-the-Art Air Purifiers in Every Valley Stream UFSD 13 Classroom Keep Our Children Safe

We know definitively that air quality plays a large part in the spread of COVID-19—including existing and emerging variants—as well as many other seasonal viruses and allergies.

Therefore it was vital for every single classroom in Valley Stream UFSD 13 to be equipped with devices that ensure children learn and grow in the safest, cleanest air possible. Working with Mark Design Studios, the District's architect, we have implemented an initiative resulting in the installation of in-room, air purifier units in every classroom. Using a state-of-the-art, four-stage air filtration system (see below) these units remove particulates from a room's airflow, changing room air three to five times per hour. Ultimately, these units effectively kill 99.99 percent of coronavirus particulates in the air.

"We are thrilled to be able to provide this significant health safeguard in our schools," said Dr. Connie Evelyn, Superintendent of Valley Stream UFSD 13.

The new air filtration devices installed in every classroom use a four-stage air filtration system.

- **Stage 1:** A pre-filter captures large particles.
- **Stage 2:** Active carbon filter absorbs odors and VOCs.
- **Stage 3:** HEPA filter captures particles as small as 0.15 microns.
- **Stage 4:** A bipolar ionizer captures the efficiency of the particulate filter.

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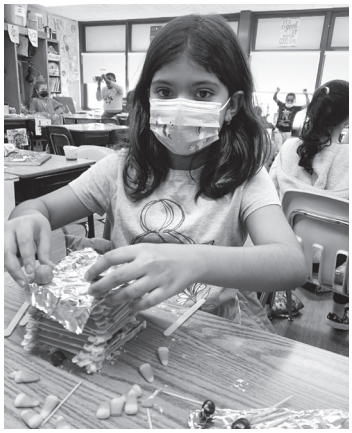
Checking in Around the District

DEVER RECREATES THE MACY'S DAY PARADE!

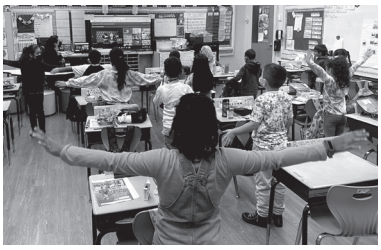
The iconic Macy's Day Parade is one of the true highlights of the holiday season, and second graders at Dever Elementary School recently got into the spirit by reading the book *Balloons Over Broadway*. The book tells the story of a man named Tony Sarg who was responsible for the floats in the original Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. After finishing the book, children each created their own personal "floats" to be in the parade. They wrote opinion letters to Macy's explaining why they thought their balloon should be in the parade. Then, they had their own parade in Dever's halls!

HOWELL ROAD SCHOOL CELEBRATES THANKSGIVING



The day before Thanksgiving, students in Howell Road Elementary School celebrated by engaging in activities that incorporated critical thinking and creative skills development. Preschoolers decorated classroom doors with large turkey graphics, adorning turkey feathers with their names. Fourth graders had a STEAM challenge where they made tables that held a turkey using toothpicks, straws, popsicle sticks, rulers, marshmallows, cranberries, candy corn, etc. Sixth graders were tasked with "saving" Thanksgiving by creating a device to transport corn to the turkey coop by using supplies such as popsicle sticks, tape, paper clips, and straws. Creating opportunities to engage students in critical thinking, incorporating STEAM-based activities in the daily curriculum, is at the heart of our educational experience.

WHEELER AVENUE ATTENDS NY ISLANDERS' VIRTUAL SCHOOL ASSEMBLY



In the fall, Wheeler Ave Elementary School students attended the New York Islanders' Virtual School Assembly. This program was designed to educate students on the importance of teamwork and healthy life choices. The assembly had interactive question and answer sessions, warm-up exercises, and students were able to watch short videos showcasing teamwork on and off the ice. One highlight saw the Islanders' mascot, Sparky, demonstrate why making smart decisions is important in school and life.

"This was a fantastic event for our students," said John Frias, principal of Wheeler Ave. "We aim to provide our students with exciting, new learning experiences—that are also a lot of fun!"

NOVEMBER MEANS KINDNESS AT WILLOW ROAD

At Willow Road Elementary School, positive character development is a major part of curriculum. Each month, the school focuses on one character trait to incorporate into lesson plans. Some of the traits that the school will be using throughout the course of the year are politeness, compassion, respect, perseverance, and thoughtfulness. In November, Willow Road focused on a trait that we could all use a bit more of: kindness. The goal was for everyone to put a special focus on practicing kindness in the classroom and in their everyday lives. For example, students were asked to let someone go ahead of them when standing in line, help a sibling learn something new, hold the door open for someone, or pay someone a genuine compliment.