

# Make the Connection



## *Turning Over a New Leaf* Valley Stream's Brand-New Vegetarian Lunch Wins Over Hearts—and Taste Buds

The key to progress in public schools is so often collaboration. Collaboration between teachers and students, the school and the community, or administrators and educators. One relationship that is pivotal to progress is between students and their superintendent. Our Superintendent Unal Karakas and our students embrace the spirit of working together, and the results of their recent meetings has really displayed the fruits of their labor. (Quite literally, it turns out.)



In February, Superintendent Karakas met with Student Council representatives of all three schools to engage in discussions about the collective vision of the district's future. Members at William L. Buck School, Robert W. Carbonaro School and Brooklyn Avenue School each gave their input and feedback during the Superintendent's visits. The array of topics were wide, ranging from new furniture that spurs collaborative work to discussions on 21st century learning through an initiative titled Vision 2023. One change has even gone into effect already; Mr. Karakas invited students to review the school lunch menu to determine what meals students would enjoy the most for lunch. As a result of this collaboration, the district began offering vegetarian choices in March!

It was the perfect example of the power of teamwork and student voice in action, where the experiences of students throughout the district are enhanced with their own input.

## All Valley Stream 24 Schools Designated Schools in Academic Good Standing

The community—and particularly the students—of the Valley Stream 24 School District deserve nothing less than the best-possible education. For this reason, we're excited to announce that all three of our schools have been officially designated as being in academic good standing, according to New York State. (According to the latest provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the former term of "good standing" is now listed as Local Support and Improvement.) The district's vision for the future is centered on continuous growth and innovation, aiming to equip students to meet the demands of the 21st century.

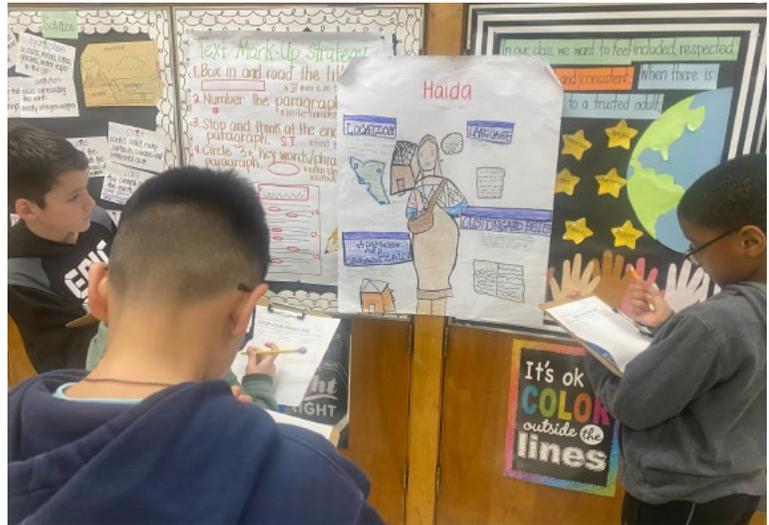
"This remarkable achievement would not have been possible without the unwavering support and active engagement of our entire district community," said Superintendent of Schools Unal Karakas. "We'd also like to recognize the diligence of our students, and appreciate the exceptional commitment and hard work demonstrated by our administrators, teachers, and staff members, all of whom have played pivotal roles in our district's attainment of this new designation."

## AROUND THE DISTRICT

### Halls of William L. Buck Transformed into a Museum to Honor Local Native American History

This March, the hallways of William L. Buck Elementary School looked a little different than usual. That was because fifth graders worked diligently to convert their walkways into a beautiful and interactive museum honoring Native American history.

In preparation, students researched indigenous American groups—including Taino, Haida and Adena—and created museum exhibits that share aspects of their culture, including their location of settlement, language, customs, beliefs, adaptations and organizations. Students showcased their creative talents by making artistic final presentations. All participants demonstrated an eagerness to learn about other cultures and worked hard to create an exciting museum displaying their discoveries.



### Brooklyn Avenue Welcomes Valley Stream South High School's Cultural Society, Who Put on an Amazing Assembly



Here, members of the Valley Stream South High School Cultural Society perform a traditional Lion Dance. This dance holds a prominent place in Chinese New Year celebrations, captivating audiences with its vibrant colors, rhythmic drumming, and intricate choreography. Rooted in ancient Chinese folklore, the lion dance symbolizes good luck, fortune, and warding off evil spirits.

Diversity makes education stronger in so many ways. In particular, the celebration of different cultures and traditions introduces many of our students to beautiful and thought-provoking art and music. Such was the case when the Brooklyn Avenue School welcomed the Valley Stream South High School Cultural Society for a day of mesmerizing dances and musical performances that represented diverse cultures from across the globe.

Through thoughtfully crafted performances, the high school students provided a remarkable learning opportunity for both students and staff, each of whom thoroughly enjoyed the enriching experience. Of course, it was particularly special to see some of the high school students returning to Brooklyn Avenue School as alumni to share their talents. Thank you so much to the Valley Stream South High School Cultural Society. We hope to see you again soon!

## United in Empathy and Support on P.S. I Love You Day

All of our schools recently celebrated P.S. I Love You Day, recognized annually on the second Friday of February, by wearing purple—the official color of P.S. I Love You Day—and taking part in a variety of classroom activities focused on mental health, suicide prevention, and standing up to bullying.

Throughout the district, students engaged in a diverse array of activities designed to promote mental wellness and foster empathy. At Brooklyn Avenue School, heartfelt messages of encouragement adorned a school-wide banner, serving as a tangible testament to the power of positivity and the importance of mental wellness. The BAS

PTA further demonstrated their support by generously donating purple bracelets, uniting students and staff in a symbolic display of solidarity. Meanwhile, at William L. Buck School, students inscribed messages of kindness and hope in colorful chalk on the school's entranceway, spreading rays of positivity for all who entered. Similarly, students at Robert W. Carbonaro School participated in uplifting social-emotional activities, infusing their hallways with a contagious spirit of optimism and compassion.



## Black History Month Showcase Highlights the Staggering Influence of African Americans in our History

Every February, people across the county honor the significant contributions of African American activists, scientists, entertainers, scholars and more to our shared American history.

Here in Valley Stream 24, schools celebrated Black History month in their own special ways. At Brooklyn Avenue School, for example, students explored the lives of influential Black leaders through extensive research conducted in the school's Library Media Center. Afterward, they used what they learned to transform their school into a captivating "living museum," crafting compelling essays and presentations using a variety of research platforms.

Beyond the classroom, they devoted time and effort to crafting authentic costumes and refining their presentations for sharing with peers, teachers, and parents. Their exceptional work and literacy skills breathed life into the wax museum, fostering connections and learning.



# MUSIC AND ARTS

## Ring in the Spring! Brooklyn Avenue and Robert W. Carbonaro Student-Musicians Celebrate the Season with Beautiful Performances



While it may have taken a while for spring weather to arrive on Long Island, our talented student-musicians at the Valley Stream 24 School District arrived just on time! The choruses at Brooklyn Avenue School and Robert W. Carbonaro School performed their annual spring concerts, celebrating the end of winter with joyous musical performances for classmates, staff, families and the community.

Under the direction of our chorus leader, Ms. Wilkey, students sang a selection of songs showcasing their talents and hard work. One song even involved audience participation, as attendees were asked to join in and emulate the sound of rainfall. William L. Buck School will be holding its spring concert in May.



# SPORTS NEWS

## Frozen Fun: Valley Stream 24 Holds Annual Sixth-Grade Hockey Tournament

Students at all three schools in the Valley Stream 24 School District recently faced off during the district's Annual Sixth-Grade Hockey Tournament at Valley Stream South High School. Robert W. Carbonaro School ultimately took home the trophy, triumphing over the teams from William L. Buck School and Brooklyn Avenue School. The tournament comprised six teams in total—two from each school—and teams were eliminated after losing two matches. Families and friends cheered on students from the stands during the exciting series of matches. "The district's hockey tournament is an awe-inspiring display of teamwork, athleticism and community," said Superintendent of Schools Mr. Unal Karakas. "Our students showed incredible sportsmanship and comraderie. We thank our administrators, physical education teachers, staff, and families for supporting our hockey tournament."

