

# Awesome Happenings



## SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

Spelling bees are a tradition in elementary schools that date back generations, and there aren't many spelling bees bigger than the Scripps National Spelling Bee competition. Recently, Valley Stream School District 24 held its own Scripps spelling bee, with the first and second place winners in each school qualifying for the regional competitions. Formerly known as the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee, the Scripps National Spelling Bee is a nonprofit organization founded by The E.W. Scripps Company that sponsors annual spelling bee competitions in the United States. Congratulations to our winners in each school! We can't wait to see how you fare moving forward.



### WINNERS:

- **Brooklyn Avenue Elementary School**  
Adriyan De, First place  
Zahra Majid, Runner-up
- **Robert W. Carbonaro Elementary School**  
Shehran Choudhury, First place  
Nigel Lian, Runner-up
- **William L. Buck Elementary School**  
Maximo Papandrea, First place  
Jake Marlborough, Runner-up



## BUCK GIVES BACK

In January, Valley Stream 24's William L. Buck Elementary School held its second annual Buck Gives Back Day in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and the National Day of Service. Activities were planned for students based on grade level. Kindergarten and first-grade students created snack bags for Meals on Wheels recipients with donated items from Valley Stream 24 families. Second-grade students crafted cards with positive messages and pictures to include in the snack bags. Third and fourth-grade students created greeting cards for seniors at Bristol Assisted Living in Lynbrook with colorful drawings and positive messages. Fifth and sixth-grade students worked together for Meals for All benefiting Last Chance Animal Rescue and North Shore Animal League. Students made no-bake, homemade treats for animals at the two shelters that are waiting for their forever homes. All of the activities that the students participated in were an extension of the school's No Place for Hate campaign.





# THE FOUR PILLARS

The Four Pillars provide an educational foundation on which the Valley Stream 24 Union Free School District cultivates an inclusive, successful, and safe environment for our students. The Four Pillars are:

1. Student Achievement
2. Wellness

3. Parent Engagement
4. Equity

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### World Read Aloud Day

Educators in the Valley Stream School District 24 don't just teach our students how to read, they strive to foster in them a lifelong love of reading. Books and stories have the power to take us to faraway places and to connect us with people all over the world. They often act as a bridge among families and generations. It's for this reason that the District enthusiastically participates in events such as World Read Aloud Day.

Created by the nonprofit organization, LitWorld, World Read Aloud Day highlights the importance of sharing stories and celebrates the power of reading aloud to build community, amplify individual stories, and advocate for literacy.

Schools throughout our District participated. At Robert W. Carbonaro Elementary School, older students celebrated the day by reading stories to their kindergarten buddies. At Brooklyn Avenue Elementary School, mystery guest readers (parents) visited classrooms. At William L. Buck Elementary School, students celebrated by having the building's staff and faculty visit each classroom to read aloud to students.



## WELLNESS

### Northwell Health Representatives Visit Valley Stream for Important Lessons on Health and Wellness

A holistic education—particularly at the elementary level—is one that educates both the mind and body. We want to help raise children who are just as intelligent about their health, diet, and mental well-being as they are arithmetic and grammar. For this reason, we often seek to partner with health-based organizations in the area to reinforce the importance of health and wellness. This winter, Northwell Health representatives recently visited Valley Stream 24 schools to speak to students about nutrition and making healthy food choices. Students learned about My Plate charts and the benefits of making healthy food choices. Students also learned how important drinking water is and how beneficial and vital water is to their overall health.

As part of the learning exercise, students had the opportunity to play various games with the theme of healthy eating such as the My Plate game. Students also received cookbooks and fresh produce that they were able to take home to enjoy preparing a meal with their families after learning about different healthy food recipes. In the spring, the Wellness on Wheels (WOW) truck will visit Valley Stream 24 schools to educate students further about building healthy habits and the tangible benefits of an active lifestyle.



## Family Forum Highlights Partnership Between School and Community

Public schooling is a partnership. It takes both parties—the educators in the school and the educators at home—working in concert for a child to truly thrive. It is vital, therefore, for us in Valley Stream School District 24 to build relationships with families that support the well-being of children and enable an even stronger connection between parent and child. To this end, the District recently hosted family forums at each school, designed to give families a space to gather in to support their students, learn, and share with each other.

Each school's family forum had a different theme. Brooklyn Avenue Elementary School, for example, celebrated the rich culture of the school during their *Love is Family, Let's Get Connected* family forum. Families, students, and staff created their own puzzle pieces and decorated them with graphics representing their own cultures. Robert W. Carbonaro Elementary School's family forum, called *This is Me*, featured students speaking about their heritage with their families, including the history of their surnames, their flags, and what made their heritage unique. At William L. Buck Elementary School's forum, titled *Cookies and Quilts*, students took home quilt squares and were encouraged to design them to represent their family heritage. Students and families were invited to share their finished quilts and explain to everyone why their family is unique and special.



## EQUITY

### The Year of the Rabbit Begins in Valley Stream 24

There is such an incredibly rich diversity of cultures and heritages in Valley Stream School District 24. Almost at any time of year, the halls of our schools are filled with artworks celebrating a culture represented in our schools. Earlier this year, students in our schools celebrated the Lunar New Year, commonly known as the Spring Festival. While often associated with Chinese traditions, many Asian countries celebrate their own version of the lunar new year, highlighting the beginning of spring and the new year based on the lunisolar calendar.

Students throughout the District learned about the lunar new year with educational and interactive activities. This year is the year of the rabbit, which symbolizes peace, longevity, and prosperity. At Robert W. Carbonaro Elementary School, a Chinese student spoke to his fellow classmates about his family's traditions and how they celebrate the lunar new year. Afterward, the students worked on their rabbit worksheets and crafted paper lanterns. At William L. Buck Elementary School, students worked on a week-long project creating spectacular moveable dragons out of paper boxes and craft materials. After finishing their moveable dragons, students and teachers had a parade featuring their dragons. At Brooklyn Avenue Elementary School, students celebrated the Lunar New Year by creating dragon puppets after learning that dragons symbolize good luck, strength, and health.





# P.S. I Love You Day at Valley Stream 24



*At Robert W. Carbonaro Elementary School, students came together by wearing purple for outdoor photos to visibly show a unified message against bullying and fighting depression. The P.S. I Love You Day t-shirts were provided by the Robert W. Carbonaro PTA.*

P.S. I Love You is an organization that strives to raise awareness of mental health and decrease bullying. By educating students early about mental health, the organization strongly believes, the conversation will be easier to discuss and students will be able to recognize when they or others around them need help.

On the second Friday of February, participating schools celebrate P.S. I Love You by wearing all purple and engaging in activities that promote good mental health, togetherness, love, kindness, suicide prevention, anti-bullying and so much more. All of our schools participate in this critical event, and we are so proud of how much our children and educators have embraced it.

“P.S. I Love You Day provides a wonderful opportunity to educate our students about the importance of mental health,” said Dr. Don Sturz, Superintendent of Valley Stream 24 Schools. “Too often, young people have trouble expressing their concerns, fears, confusion, and emotions. They are experiencing feelings they’ve never had before and don’t understand. That can lead to depression, behavioral problems, and in extreme instances, the unthinkable—suicide. In our District, teaching our students about the importance of mental health is part of our social-emotional curriculum. P.S. I Love You Day is another tool we use to bring greater awareness about these issues to our students.”

*At Brooklyn Avenue Elementary School, students acknowledged P.S. I Love You Day by creating a big book of “Love All Your Chapters,” which was the theme of 2023 P.S. I Love You Day. Students posted messages about the importance of kindness and good health. Students also had the opportunity to take P.S. I Love You Day-themed selfies.*



*At William L. Buck Elementary School, students set up high-five stations to let their peers know that they were loved. Students also created a chapter book to represent this year’s theme of “Love All Your Chapters.” Each student wrote about an event in their lives that was challenging, an event that had a positive impact.*

