

# Make the Connection



## In 2023-2024, it's All About Making the Connection

It is vitally important to prioritize togetherness and collaboration. That's why our theme this year is "Make the Connection." We know that we're better together, and to fully achieve our goals, we need to make the connection with one another.

This spirit crystallized during our recent Unity Day program. A nationwide initiative organized by PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, Unity Day marks a pivotal event during Bullying Prevention Month. To show support, students and staff of the Valley Stream 24 community were encouraged to wear orange to rally for bullying prevention. Students actively participated in a variety of activities aimed at emphasizing the importance of empathy and respect for everyone. The Unity Day spirit transcended into the classrooms, where students created unity bracelets to exchange with their fellow peers. Additionally, they constructed kindness chains using orange construction paper and strings, representing unity and the strong connections that bind them together.



## Sixth Grade Charity Car Wash a Smashing Success: Over \$1,200 Raised!

Never let it be said that sixth graders—and their families—in the Valley Stream 24 School District won't go the extra mile to make their school year as memorable as possible. This fall, our students rallied together and pulled off a dynamic charity car wash to raise money for engaging activities and programs for the sixth grade class. By the end of the day, the students, with a little help from their families, raised over \$1,200 that will directly benefit the class. Well done, all!

Superintendent Unal Karakas, Principal Dr. Scott Comis, and staff actively joined the event to support the sixth-grade students, while Valley Stream residents graciously brought their vehicles to champion this important cause. Students worked together with their families, staff, and volunteers to clean vehicles while brightening the day for all who supported the fundraiser.

"Our sixth-grade students put so much effort and enthusiasm into their car wash, and it's amazing to see how it paid off," said Superintendent Karakas. "Their achievement is a testament to the strong sense of community that thrives within our school district and highlights the invaluable life skills our students are acquiring. I am incredibly proud of our sixth graders and grateful to the parents, staff, and volunteers who supported them."





# Kindergartners Celebrate Literacy in a Creative Way

Valley Stream District 24 believes deeply in instilling an early love of reading. The William L. Buck Elementary School PTA recently hosted a "Kindergarten PJ Story Time," which featured a Build-a-Bear station, delicious snacks, a read-aloud, a special guest appearance by a life-size dinosaur (note: not a real dinosaur) and students reading in their pajamas! It was a huge hit with scholars; our youngest learners enjoyed reading, playing games with friends, and bonding with their parents. A fun time was had by all!



## Valley Stream 24 Students' Innate Uniqueness is Celebrated Every International Dot Day

International Dot Day is one of the most beloved traditions of the early school calendar. A day bursting with creativity and self-expression, International Dot Day is a worldwide celebration of courage and collaboration, inspired by the book *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds. *The Dot*

follows the journey of a compassionate teacher who challenges a skeptical student to believe in her own capabilities by taking a bold step to make her mark. What begins as a simple dot on a piece of paper blossoms into a voyage of self-confidence, courage, and self-discovery, inspiring students to share their unique talents with the world. All throughout Valley Stream 24 schools on Dot Day, students immersed themselves in the positive messages of affirmation that abound in this powerful book.



*"Valley Stream 24 School District remains committed to fostering an environment where students are encouraged to embrace their uniqueness and tap into their creativity."*

At William L. Buck School, for example, Library Media Specialist Karen Mylan played a pivotal role in nurturing the students' creative spirits. In the media center, students harnessed technology and their artistic talents to craft their individual dots. Ms. Mylan then guided them in bringing their creations to life using the Quiver App, an innovative digital application that seamlessly blends traditional coloring with augmented reality, transforming two-dimensional drawings into captivating three-dimensional images.



## Valley Stream 24 Community Bands Together to Honor Cherished Teacher's Memory

Saying goodbye to a beloved member of any family is difficult, and certainly this is no different at Valley Stream 24. Recently, members from all over our school community came together to honor the legacy of retired teacher Jim Friel, who passed away this past February, with a ribbon-cutting for a bench dedicated in his name. Mr. Friel's family donated the bench to Robert W. Carbonaro School, where he taught for 16 years, and cut the ribbon at a ceremony with district administration, staff, and Board of Education members.

Mr. Friel was born in Rockville Centre before moving to Valley Stream. He and his wife, Peggy, raised two children and have four grandchildren. Mr. Friel is remembered for his selflessness, kindness, and his passion for giving his students the confidence to believe in themselves. Principal Rosario Iacono, along with Mr. Friel's wife, Peggy, and district staff members, delivered heartfelt speeches to the community, reflecting on Mr. Friel's profound influence and the numerous lives he touched.



## Literacy, Cuisine, and Culture: Hispanic Heritage Month Celebrated at Valley Stream 24

The Valley Stream School District 24 has a deep-seeded commitment to fostering an understanding of the various cultures at our schools through literacy, social studies, and STEAM education. Kindergarteners in Valley Stream 24 celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month through an enriching lesson that seamlessly integrated literacy, culinary delights, and cultural exploration.

Superintendent of Schools, Unal Karakas, joined in on the festivities, reading to the students from Becky Chavarria-Cháirez's book *Magda's Tortillas*, a tale of a young girl learning the art of tortilla-making from her *abuela*. Drawing inspiration from Magda's journey, the kindergarten children enthusiastically rolled dough, mirroring the story, while their teachers crafted *pupusas*.

"It is truly amazing to witness our students embrace the knowledge imparted during the read aloud," said Superintendent Karakas. "They also applied it in such a meaningful way through engaging in cultural activities."





# Book Fairs are Back: Timeless Fun and Critical Instruction

What adult among us doesn't miss the Scholastic school book fair? A whole day dedicated to browsing and exploring new and exciting books? Yes, please! Lucky students at Brooklyn Avenue School, Robert W. Carbonaro School and William L. Buck Elementary School recently participated in book fair fun, exploring the joy of reading with their friends and teachers.

It wasn't just fun and relaxation, of course. Our inventive teachers used the book fair as an opportunity for further instruction and learning. Not only did students discover and read new books, they were tasked with reviewing books and sharing what they enjoyed, practices that strengthen critical thinking and reading comprehension. The recent book fairs were spearheaded by The Parent Teacher Association at each school to create a memorable experience for the students. The District thanks all of the parent volunteers that made this book fair possible.

*"It's amazing to see how excited our students are about reading, and the Scholastic Book Fair is the perfect outlet to nurture that enthusiasm. I want to extend my gratitude to the PTAs at each school that help make events like this possible."*

*- Superintendent of Schools Mr. Unal Karakas*



## Firefighter Heroes Visit to Teach Fire Safety



The Valley Stream Fire Department Fire Safety and Education Committee, alongside Ladder Company 2, recently visited our schools in the Valley Stream 24 to teach students critical lessons about fire safety.

During their informative and interactive assembly, Valley Stream firefighters dazzled students by demonstrating to them all the facets of a modern fire uniform and firetruck. Scholars were able to take turns sitting in the truck and, while inside, learn about each of the truck's tools and equipment, gaining insights into the vital resources firefighters have at their disposal when responding to emergencies. This practical exposure not only enriched their understanding of fire safety but also kindled their fascination with the world of firefighting.

