

# Awesome Happenings



Spring is a time for growth, and the students at Valley Stream School District 24 have embraced that mindset over the past few months. Our four pillars—Wellness, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Student Achievement and Parent Engagement—shape our curriculum, ensuring that each student has the ability to learn and express creative freedoms. This spring, our students and their families successfully enjoyed STEAM activities, celebrated different learning styles and discovered the value of a kind word.

**The District's Four Pillars to help achieve a safe and successful school year are:**

- 1. Student Achievement**
- 2. Wellness**
- 3. Parent Engagement**
- 4. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### ENRICHMENT FOR ALL SETS STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS



Valley Stream 24's Enrichment for All program encourages all students to engage in science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) subjects. Enrichment for All lessons focus on problem-solving, developing critical and creative thinking strategies and fostering logical reasoning skills. Students learn the value of perseverance as they tackle activities and issues that may not always have an obvious answer.

This spring, Robert W. Carbonaro School students have had a blast incorporating STEAM activities into their learning. Kindergarteners learned about symmetry and the different parts of a bug, including the head, abdomen, thorax, antennae and wings. They even drew their own bugs using oil pastels! First graders worked on their measuring and estimation skills by building candy heart towers. Students predicted how tall they could make their structures and measured them by counting their heart stacks. They took on additional challenges to create more intricate, complex designs, like candy heart walls. And for Black History and Women's History months, 3rd graders learned about African-American artist Alma Woodsey Thomas, who was the first fine arts graduate from Howard University and the first African-American woman to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. They created paintings inspired by Thomas' rhythm and pattern.

Over at William L. Buck, students in grades kindergarten through 2nd learned about springtime weather. Students were challenged to create their own kites and observe how the wind impacted their flights. Continuing the discussion in the classroom, students learned how quickly spring temperatures can change and how cold and warm air mixing together can occasionally spin into a tornado! The students learned more about tornados, and demonstrated the spinning motion inside a cup.

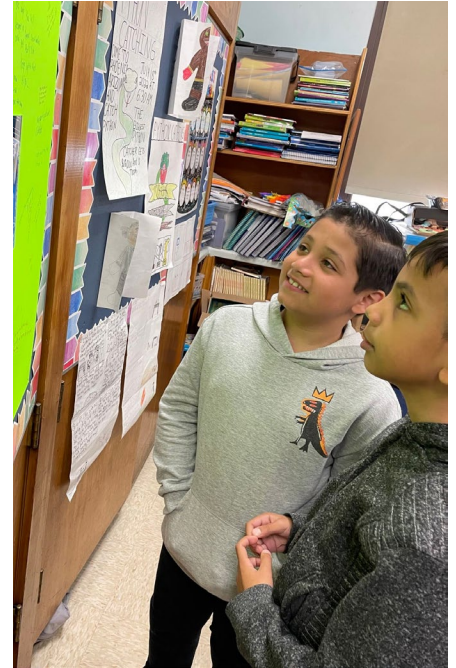
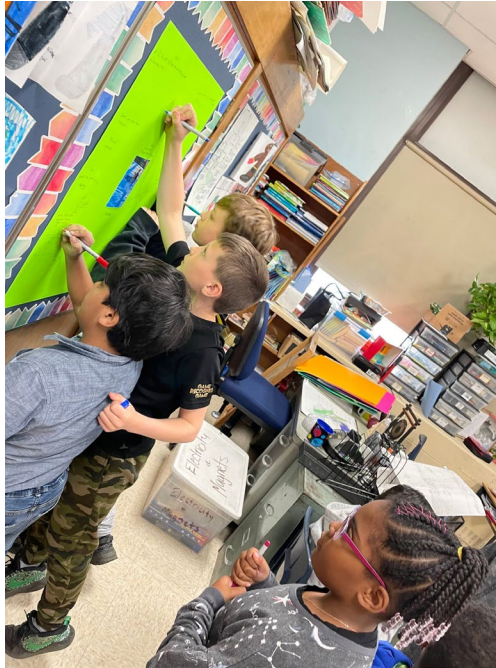
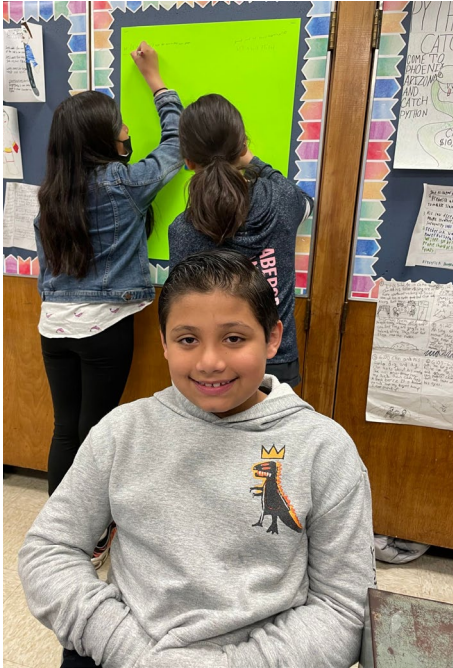
At Brooklyn Avenue School's Enrichment for All initiative, the focus was on art. There, Miss Nicole Barci has been working with students to build on classroom lessons. They complete hands-on projects that let students use a variety of tools and new skills, as well as their own creativity and imagination. As a mark of the program's success, students are excited to bring their completed projects home for their families to see.

Enrichment for All allows students across all Valley Stream 24 schools to challenge themselves as they find creative solutions to the problems at hand. We look forward to building on these lessons in the fall!



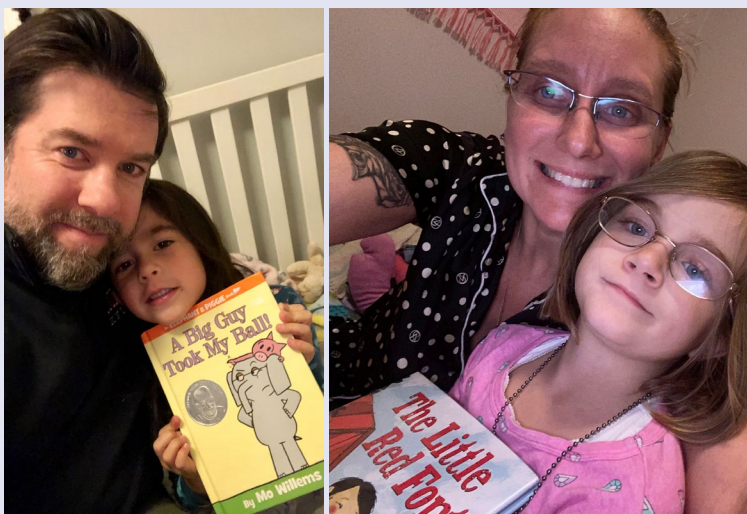
## STUDENTS HAVE A 'HOT' TIME CELEBRATING KINDNESS

As an important pillar in the Valley Stream 24 curriculum, wellness encompasses a variety of activities in which students are encouraged to lead a healthy and positive lifestyle. Valley Stream 24 hopes to encourage students to develop emotional, intellectual, physical and social wellness. In early April, scholars at William L. Buck participated in an activity called the Hot Seat. Students take turns sitting in a hot seat, while the other students write positive messages about them on a board that's facing away from the hot seat. After all the messages are written, the hot seat scholar turns around to read all of the supportive and encouraging things that their classmates said about them. This underscores an integral part of Valley Stream 24's values: It's important for all our students to practice kindness, as well as receive it.



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT

## STUDENTS & PARENTS FEEL THE NEED TO READ!



This year, scholars at the William L. Buck School successfully completed the Parents as Reading Partners program. Students are divided into four teams, and they compete in various reading challenges to earn points over the course of a month. Examples of challenges include completing reading logs, hunting for mascots, and exhibiting qualities like kindness, responsibility and respectfulness. They're also encouraged to read a variety of book genres. At the William L. Buck School, Parents as Reading Partners is a collaborative effort between the PTA, the Reading Department, and the Library Department. All winning team members who complete their reading logs receive a trophy.



## Valley Stream 24 Lights it Blue for Autism Awareness

April is Autism Acceptance Month, and on Friday, April 1, Valley Stream 24's three schools celebrated Autism Acceptance Day. Students showed their support in a number of ways to highlight the importance of understanding and accepting all different learning styles.

"Across the District, we are proud of our students and staff for their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion," said Dr. Don Sturz, Superintendent of Valley Stream 24 Schools. "It is important to educate our students about autism and neurodiversity so that they can show compassion and support for those who may be different from them. It's great to see our students celebrate and respect everyone's differences."

Students engaged in discussions about autism and how to show support for those who are on the spectrum. They also enjoyed reading *So Many Smarts* by Michael Genhart. The book celebrates all of the ways in which students can express how they learn. No two people show their "smarts" in exactly the same way. Students were able to identify some of the ways they show their own strengths by writing them down in a hot air balloon worksheet that encouraged them to "Soar with your Strengths."

Students, faculty and staff also wore blue in support of Autism Speaks' Light it Up Blue campaign. Autism Speaks is an autism advocacy association.



## Valley Stream 24 Rocks its Socks

Students, faculty and staff in all three of Valley Stream 24's schools "rocked their socks" on March 21 in celebration of World Down Syndrome Day. The #RockYourSocks campaign focuses on wearing mismatched socks, because the karyotype – the visual appearance of the chromosomes – of Down syndrome resembles mismatched socks.

"It was inspiring to see our students, faculty, and staff wearing mismatched socks to school on World Down Syndrome Day," said Dr. Don Sturz, Superintendent of Valley Stream 24 Schools. "It's important to bring awareness and educate our students about what Down syndrome is, what it means for someone who has Down syndrome, and how people with Down syndrome play a vital role in our communities. With understanding comes acceptance and a greater opportunity for inclusion in all aspects of life for those with Down syndrome."

World Down Syndrome Day has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. March 21 (3/21) is significant because it resembles the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome, which causes Down syndrome.



**We'd like to thank the entire community for your support of the 2022-2023 school budget. Because of you, we'll be able to make necessary improvements to our facilities, as well as prepare for the future needs of our students. We hope you have a great summer, and we look forward to welcoming you back in the fall.**