

2025-26 Parent Newsletter #5

Happy New Year!!! May the New Year usher in copious amounts of health and happiness to all JKO families and staff. Since we are on the topic, it is fitting to note that Times Square (Our school vicinity) was jam packed with New Year's Eve revelers waiting for the ball to drop. Below is a brief overview of this yearly event:

History of the New Year's Eve Ball

Revelers began celebrating New Year's Eve in Times Square as early as 1904, but it was in 1907 that the New Year's Eve Ball made its maiden descent from the flagpole atop One Times Square. Seven versions of the Ball have been designed to signal the New Year. The first New Year's Eve Ball, made of iron and wood and adorned with one hundred 25-watt light bulbs, was 5 feet in diameter and weighed 700 pounds. It was built by a young immigrant metalworker named Jacob Starr, and for most of the twentieth century the company he founded, sign maker Artkraft Strauss, was responsible for lowering the Ball. As part of the 1907-1908 festivities, waiters in the fabled "lobster palaces" and other deluxe eateries in hotels surrounding Times Square were supplied with battery-powered top hats emblazoned with the numbers "1908" fashioned of tiny light bulbs. At the stroke of midnight, they all "flipped their lids" and the year on their foreheads lit up in conjunction with the numbers "1908" on the parapet of the Times Tower lighting up to signal the arrival of the new year. The Ball has been lowered every year since 1907, with the exceptions of 1942 and 1943, when the ceremony was suspended due to the wartime "dimout" of lights in New York City. Nevertheless, the crowds still gathered in Times Square in those years and greeted the New Year with a minute of silence followed by the ringing of chimes from sound trucks parked at the base of the tower—a harkening-back to the earlier celebrations at Trinity Church, where crowds would gather to "ring out the old, ring in the new."



In 1920, a 400 pound Ball made entirely of wrought iron replaced the original. In 1955, the iron Ball was replaced with an aluminum Ball weighing a mere 150 pounds. This aluminum Ball remained unchanged until the 1980s, when red light bulbs and the addition of a green stem

converted the Ball into an apple for the "I Love New York" marketing campaign from 1981 until 1988. After seven years, the traditional glowing white Ball with white light bulbs and without the green stem returned to brightly light the sky above Times Square. In 1995, the Ball was upgraded with aluminum skin, rhinestones, strobes, and computer controls, but the aluminum Ball was lowered for the last time in 1998.

For Times Square 2000, the millennium celebration at the Crossroads of the World, the New Year's Eve Ball was completely redesigned. The crystal Ball combined the latest in lighting technology with the most traditional of materials, reminding us of our past as we gazed into the future and the beginning of a new millennium.^[1]_{SEP}

In 2007, for the 100th anniversary of the Times Square Ball Drop tradition, a spectacular new LED crystal Ball was created. The incandescent and halogen bulbs of the past century were replaced by state-of-the-art LED lighting technology that dramatically increased the brightness and color capabilities of the Ball.

The beauty and energy efficiency of the Centennial Ball inspired the building owners of One Times Square to build the permanent Big Ball weighing nearly six tons and twelve feet in diameter. The 2,688 crystal triangles were illuminated by 32,256 LEDs. This Big Times Square New Year's Eve Ball became a year-round attraction, sparkling above Times Square in full public view January through December.

In November 2025, One Times Square debuted the Constellation Ball: the ninth Ball to carry on the tradition as the focal point of the Ball Drop, and the biggest Ball yet. With 5,280 crystals and LED light pucks, The Constellation Ball measures 12.5 feet in diameter and weighs 12,350 pounds. The new Ball features Waterford Crystals in circular shapes, allowing for greater crystal surface coverage and evoking the image of celestial bodies, celebrating infinite possibilities and the interconnectedness of humanity.

About "Time-Balls"

The actual notion of a ball "dropping" to signal the passage of time dates back long before New Year's Eve was ever celebrated in Times Square. The first "time-ball" was installed atop England's Royal Observatory at Greenwich in 1833. This ball would drop at one o'clock every afternoon, allowing the captains of nearby ships to precisely set their chronometers (a vital navigational instrument).

Around 150 public time-balls are believed to have been installed around the world after the success at Greenwich, though few survive and still work. The tradition is carried on today in places like the United States Naval Observatory in Washington, DC, where a time-ball descends from a flagpole at noon each day - and of course, once a year in Times Square, where it marks the stroke of midnight not for a few ships' captains, but for over one billion people watching worldwide.

Source: <https://www.timessquarenyc.org/nye/nye-history-times-square-ball>

Announcements

From the counseling department:







- ❖ **1st period Class begins at 8:20 A.M.** Students need to **arrive to school prior to 8:20 AM** and on time regularly so they are able to effectively engage in their first period lesson. Lateness adversely impacts a student's academic performance. **The school day ends at 2:40 P.M.**
- ❖ **If your child is or will be absent**, please contact Ms. Garcia (9-10th Grade Students) at ext. 5052 or email at NGarcia33@schools.nyc.gov ; Mrs. Vega-Beltran (11-12th Grade Students) at ext. 5091 or via email at NVega11@schools.nyc.gov ; or Ms. Bernabel, Parent Coordinator, at ext. 1012 or email at ABernabel@schools.nyc.gov . **Please be sure to send an excuse note for your child's absence and/or a doctor's note if your child has a medical appointment.**
 - Please ensure that your child's medical documents or any other important documents are updated and we have updated copies.
- ❖ **Please keep track of your child's academic progress, grades, and attendance in their classes through the SyncGrades website.** Please be sure that your child's NYC Student Email account is updated. If you would like to schedule meetings with teachers on Tuesdays, please contact your child's School Counselor.
- ❖ **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:**
 - FRIDAY, JANUARY 16TH: LAST DAY OF FALL SEMESTER
 - MONDAY, JANUARY 19TH: NO SCHOOL – DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY
 - TUESDAY, JANUARY 20 – FRIDAY, JANUARY 23RD: NYS REGENTS EXAMS
 - MONDAY, JANUARY 26TH: NO SCHOOL – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY
 - TUESDAY, JANUARY 27TH: FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR SPRING SEMESTER
- ❖ **COLLEGE NOW** – If you are interested in having your 11th or 12th grader take FREE College courses while in high school through the City University of New York Colleges/Universities, please contact Mrs. Vega-Beltran. This is a great opportunity for your child to have those course credits apply to their College Degree for FREE!
- ❖ In order to maintain a positive learning environment, it is **expected that students dress in a professional manner.** **We expect students to be dressed appropriately** to ensure safety and to keep the focus on teaching and learning. **We would like all parents and guardians to remind students of proper dress protocols on campus.**
Prohibited forms of dress at school include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Clothing that contains references to drugs, alcohol, sex, violence, racism, or gang-affiliation.
 - 2) Revealing clothing that does not provide coverage of torso, undergarments, and private body parts, including see-through garments of any kind.
 - 3) Sunglasses while indoors.**If you need assistance providing your child clothing, please contact your child's counselor.**
- ❖ **Students are NOT ALLOWED TO USE CELL PHONES DURING SCHOOL HOURS. This includes iPads, Apple MacBook, Smart watches or any non-DOE issued electronic device.** They must keep their phones locked in their yonder pouch. **In case of an emergency, please call the school to contact your child and students can use a school office phone to contact their parent/guardian.**

- ❖ **12th GRADE SENIOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:** Please work closely with your senior child this school year to discuss their post-secondary options (plans after high school). They will need your support and encouragement when applying to college/university, trade school, military, and/or financial aid/scholarships. Please look out for future communication regarding college trips, workshops, financial aid, and important deadlines.
- ❖ **CATCH and ELEVATE** – community based organizations, will be providing in class workshops to students of various grade levels regarding making positive choices for healthier lifestyles. This health education program will provide various workshops throughout the semester.
 - Health Service Fridays in Room 108
- ❖ **Please have your child meet for one on one academic/personal progress meetings with their counselor immediately:** Ms. Garcia (9-10th Graders) and Mrs. Vega-Beltran (11-12th Graders). This meeting is important to ensure they are on track academically with their progress towards graduation and to check in on their personal well-being.
- ❖ **Please reach out to Ms. Garcia (9-10th Grades) or Mrs. Vega-Beltran (11-12th Grade) if you feel that your child needs social/emotional support.** We have an abundance of services for students at the school and can refer your family to outside resources/assistance.
- ❖ **Please have your child attend tutoring and join extra-curricular activities** to be an active member of the school community. This a great way for students to make new friends, network, and be exposed to various activities/hobbies. We will send information for tutoring and extra-curricular activities in the coming weeks.

AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORING

Tutoring	Date	Time	Subject Area	ROOM #
MATH				
Hassan	Wednes/Thurs	2:45-3:45 pm	Alegbra 1	406
Falah	Tuesday	3:21-4:00 pm	Alegbra 2/ Trig	402
Falah	Wednesday	2:41-4:00 om	Alegbra 2/ Trig	402
Faruque	Thursday	2:45-3:45 pm	Geometry	405
Chen	Tuesday	3:21-4:21 pm	All Math	402
Cumberbatch	Wednesday	2:45-3:45 pm	Alegbra 1	303
Science				
Okwabi	Wednesday	2:41-3:45 pm	Chem. CSM. Env	308
Beauchine	Friday	2:41-3:41 pm	Biology	307
Fares	Friday	2:41 -3:41 pm	Biology	304
Cumberbatch	Thursday	2:45-3:45 pm	Chem.	303
History				
Marshall	Thursday	2:45-3:45 pm	AP World/Marco	309
Gordon	Wednesday	2:45-3:45pm	US HIStory	304
Gordon	Thursday	2:45-3:45	Global History	304
Colon	Wednesday	2:45-3:45pm	US History	102
Colon	Thursday	Upon Request (Please discuss with teacher for meeting times)		
English				
Pelletier	Upon Request (Please discuss with teacher for meeting times)			
Vannieuwenhuys	Wednesday	2:45- 3:45 pm	English	306
El Mardi	Wednesday	2:41-3:41	English	301
Business				
Milan	Upon Request (Please discuss with teacher for meeting times)			
Newell	Friday	2:41-3:41	V/E/ Comp. App	411
Nson/Steve	Friday	2:41-3:41	Comp. App, Enp	409
Spanish				
Alcorn	Thursday	2:45-3:45 pm	Spanish All Leve	302
ART				
Degregrio	Upon Request (Please discuss with teacher for meeting times)			
Physical Education				
Padgett	Wednesday	2:45-3:45 pm	P.E	Weight Room

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



National Honor Society (NHS)			Degregrio
Wednesday	2:41 PM	Room 201	
Smash Art Productions			Degregrio
Friday	2:41 PM	Room 201	
Glamour Gals and Pals			Cumberbatch
Tuesday	3:21 PM	Room 303	
Volleyball Club			Rushforth
Tuesday	3:21 PM	GYM	
Chess			Chen
Wednesday	2:41 PM	Room 404	
Music Club			Chen
Thursday	2:41 PM	Room 405B	
Fitness Club			Chen
Friday	2:41 PM	Weight Room	
Student Government			Okwabi
Thursday	3:30	Room 308	
Senior Council			Okwabi
Thursday	2:41	Auditorium	
Crochet Club			Alcorn
Thursday	3:45 PM	Room 302	
Help Hands Society			Kadison
Alternating Thu	3:00 PM	301 B	
YearBook			Kadison
Wednesday	3:00 PM	301B	

Please feel free to contact your child's School Counselor directly with any questions, concerns, or if you need assistance:

Ms. Niurkary Garcia, 9 & 10th Grade Counselor (212)391-0041 Ext. 5052

Email: NGarcia33@schools.nyc.gov

Mrs. Nicole Vega-Beltran, 11 & 12th Grade Counselor 212-391-0041 Ext. 5091 Email:

NVega11@schools.nyc.gov

DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE ASESORAMIENTO:

- ❖ **1 periodo La clase comienza a las 8:20 A.M.** Los estudiantes **deben llegar a la escuela antes de las 8:20 A.M.** y puntualmente regularmente para que puedan participar de manera efectiva en su lección del primer período. La tardanza afecta negativamente el rendimiento académico de un estudiante. La jornada escolar finaliza a las 14:40 horas.
- ❖ **Si su hijo está o estará ausente**, comuníquese con la Sra. García (estudiantes de 9.º a 10.º grado) en la ext. 5052 o correo electrónico a NGarcia33@schools.nyc.gov; Sra. Vega-Beltran (Estudiantes de 11º y 12º grado) en la ext. 5091 o por correo electrónico a NVega11@schools.nyc.gov; o la Sra. Bernabel, Coordinadora de Padres, en la ext. 1012 o correo electrónico a ABernabel@schools.nyc.gov.
Asegúrese de enviar una nota de excusa por la ausencia de su hijo y/o una nota del médico si su hijo tiene una cita médica.
 - **Asegúrese de que los documentos médicos de su hijo o cualquier otro documento importante estén actualizados y que tengamos copias actualizadas.**
- ❖ **Realice un seguimiento del progreso académico, las calificaciones y la asistencia a clases de su hijo a través del sitio web SyncGrades.** Asegúrese de que la cuenta de correo electrónico estudiantil de NYC de su hijo esté actualizada. Si desea programar reuniones con los maestros los martes, comuníquese con el consejero escolar de su hijo.
- ❖ **FECHAS IMPORTANTES PARA RECORDAR:**
 - Viernes, 16 de enero: Último día del semestre de otoño
 - Lunes, 19 de enero: No hay clases – Día de Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Martes, 20 al viernes, 23 de enero: Exámenes Regents del Estado de Nueva York
 - Lunes, 26 de enero: No hay clases – Día de desarrollo profesional
 - Martes, 27 de enero: Primer día de clases del semestre de primavera



- ❖ **UNIVERSIDAD AHORA** – Si está interesado en que su hijo de 11.º o 12.º grado tome cursos universitarios GRATUITOS mientras está en la escuela secundaria a través de las universidades de la City University of New York, comuníquese con la Sra. Vega-Beltrán. ¡Esta es una gran oportunidad para que su hijo obtenga los créditos de esos cursos para su título universitario GRATIS!
- ❖ Para mantener un ambiente de aprendizaje positivo, **se espera que los estudiantes se vistan de manera profesional. Esperamos que los estudiantes vistan apropiadamente** para garantizar la seguridad y mantener el enfoque en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje. **Nos gustaría que todos los padres y tutores recuerden a los estudiantes los protocolos de vestimenta adecuados en el campus. Las formas de vestimenta prohibidas en la escuela incluyen, entre otras:**
 - 1) Ropa que contenga referencias a drogas, alcohol, sexo, violencia, racismo o afiliación a pandillas.
 - 2) Ropa reveladora que no cubra el torso, la ropa interior y las partes privadas del cuerpo, incluidas prendas transparentes de cualquier tipo.
 - 3) Gafas de sol mientras esté en el interior.**Si necesita ayuda para proporcionarle ropa a su hijo, comuníquese con el consejero de su hijo.**
- ❖ **NO SE PERMITE A LOS ESTUDIANTES UTILIZAR TELÉFONOS CELULARES DURANTE EL HORARIO ESCOLAR. Esto incluye iPads y relojes inteligentes que están conectados a sus teléfonos.** Deben mantener sus teléfonos bajo llave en su bolsa. **En caso de una emergencia, llame a la escuela para comunicarse con su hijo y los estudiantes pueden usar el teléfono de la oficina de la escuela para comunicarse con sus padres/tutores.**
- ❖ **12º GRADO PADRES/TUTORES MAYORES:** Trabaje estrechamente con su hijo mayor este año escolar para discutir sus opciones postsecundarias (planes después de la escuela secundaria). Necesitarán su apoyo y aliento cuando soliciten ingreso a la universidad, escuela de oficios, ejército y/o ayuda/becas financieras. Esté atento a comunicaciones futuras sobre viajes universitarios, talleres, ayuda financiera y fechas límite importantes.
- ❖ **CATCH y ELEVATE** – organizaciones comunitarias, impartirán talleres en el aula a estudiantes de diferentes niveles educativos sobre cómo tomar decisiones positivas para llevar un estilo de vida más saludable. Este programa de educación para la salud ofrecerá varios talleres a lo largo del semestre.
 - o Viernes de Servicios de Salud en el Salón 108
- ❖ **Haga que su hijo se reúna inmediatamente para reuniones individuales de progreso académico/personal con su consejero:** Sra. García (estudiantes de 9.º a 10.º grado) y Sra. Vega-Beltrán (estudiantes de 11.º a 12.º grado). Esta reunión es importante para garantizar que estén encaminados académicamente con su progreso hacia la graduación y para controlar su bienestar personal.
- ❖ **Haga que su hijo asista a tutorías y se una a actividades extracurriculares para ser un miembro activo de la comunidad escolar.** Esta es una excelente manera para que los estudiantes hagan nuevos amigos, establezcan contactos y estén expuestos a diversas actividades/pasatiempos. Enviaremos información para tutorías y actividades extracurriculares en las próximas semanas.
- ❖ **Comuníquese con la Sra. García (grados 9-10) o la Sra. Vega-Beltrán (grados 11-12) si cree que su hijo necesita apoyo social/emocional.** Tenemos una gran cantidad de servicios para los estudiantes en la escuela y podemos derivar a su familia a recursos/asistencia externos.

ACTIVIDADES EXTRAESCOLARES

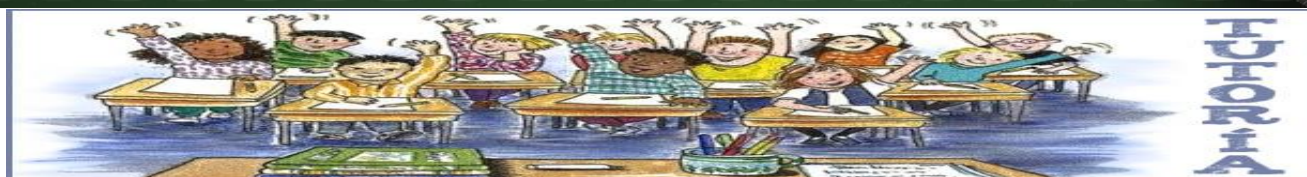


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After School Clubs





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No dude en comunicarse directamente con el consejero escolar de su hijo si tiene alguna pregunta, inquietud o si necesita ayuda:

Sra. Niurkary García, Consejera de 9y10 grado(212)391-0041 Ext.5052 Correo electrónico:

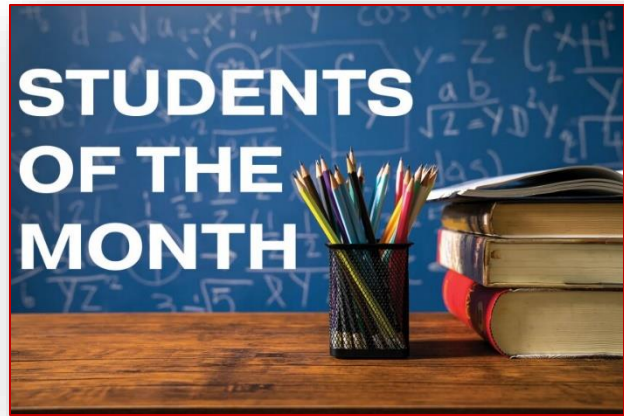
NGarcia33@schools.nyc.gov

Sra. Nicole Vega-Beltran, Consejera de 11º y 12º grado 212-391-0041 Ext. 5091 Correo electrónico:

NVega11@schools.nyc.gov



A message from Mr. Williams:



It is my pleasure to announce the names of the following students who were selected as Students of the Month for November.

9th Grade
-Christopher Cruz

10th Grade
-Moriam Begum

11th Grade
-Viktoriia Tsesareva

12th Grade
-Ivanny Melendez
-Tanish Kumar

The above-mentioned students were recognized for their contributions to the JKO community on Friday, December 12th.





A message from Ms. De Gregorio:

Dear JKO,

Thank you to everyone who helped make the **JKO Celebrates Family "Then and Now"** project such a lovely and heartfelt evening.

We had a wonderful turnout of families and friends who generously shared delicious homemade dishes and desserts. In many cases, entire families attended, creating a truly special atmosphere. One particularly meaningful moment was welcoming Daniel Ravunakana's mother and sisters, who had arrived from Fiji that very morning and still took the time to join us—and even brought chicken stir-fry to share. (Daniel only recently joined JKO four weeks ago!) The evening felt warm, inclusive, and deeply connected to the legacy of the family stories we set out to honor.

Hearing about the hardships many of our students' families endured in migrating to the United States, and the lessons students have learned from their parents and elders, was truly moving and inspiring.

A special thank you to Ms. Jimenez, our beloved "JKO Grandma," for warmly welcoming families at the door, to Ms. Bernabel, who tirelessly dedicates herself to our students and families and showed up to assist despite not feeling well, and to Mr. Williams, Mr. Kloppenburg, Mr. Van, and Ms. Milan for their support.

A very big thank you to Ms. El Mardi for saying yes to a theater project that required significant time, planning, and countless emails. Even without prior theater experience, she courageously stepped into the unknown and embraced the challenge wholeheartedly.

This project felt especially poignant in this moment. We have all come from somewhere else, converging here to create a better life for the next generation.

With much gratitude,
Ms. D

Thank you Ms. De Gregorio and Ms. El Mardi for spearheading this event!!!



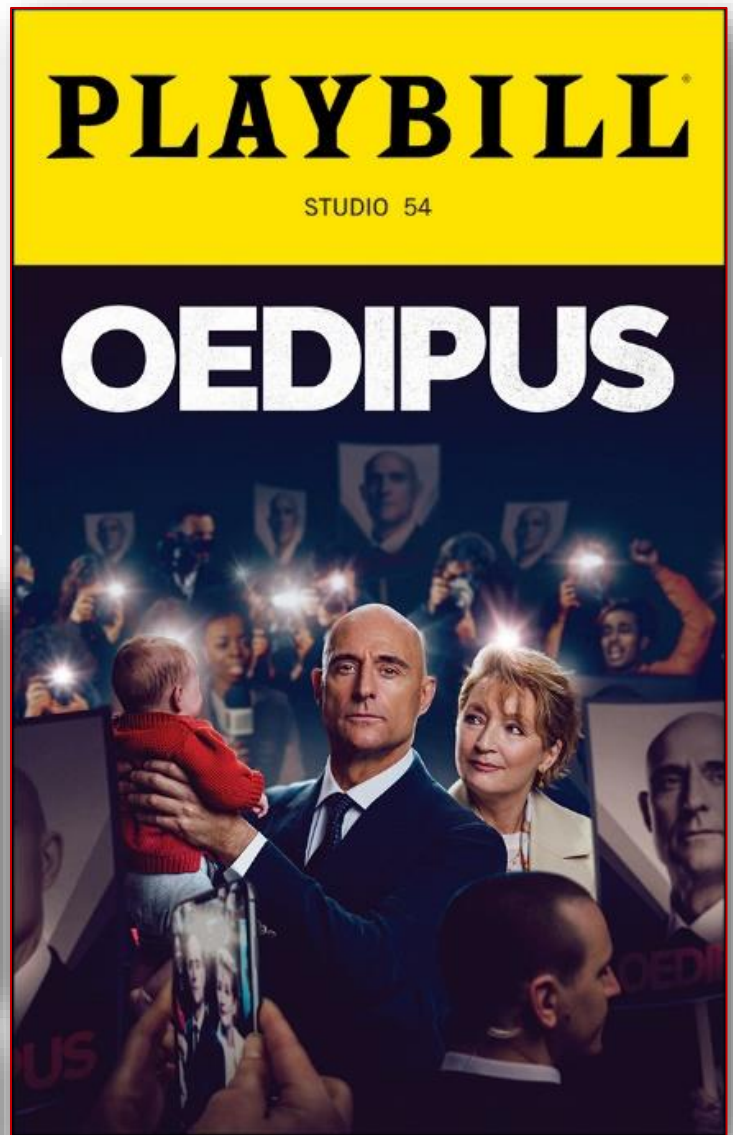




In the Spotlight

JKO

On the week of December 15th, JKO students attended the Broadway showing of Oedipus. The play was absolutely fabulous!!! A BIG thank you to Ms. Kadison for spearheading this trip.





On December 22nd, Ms. D's art students displayed their holiday ginger bread house creations. They were all amazing!!! The JKO community voted on various categories. Below are the results.

From Ms. D:

We had 112 people vote today and the winners are:

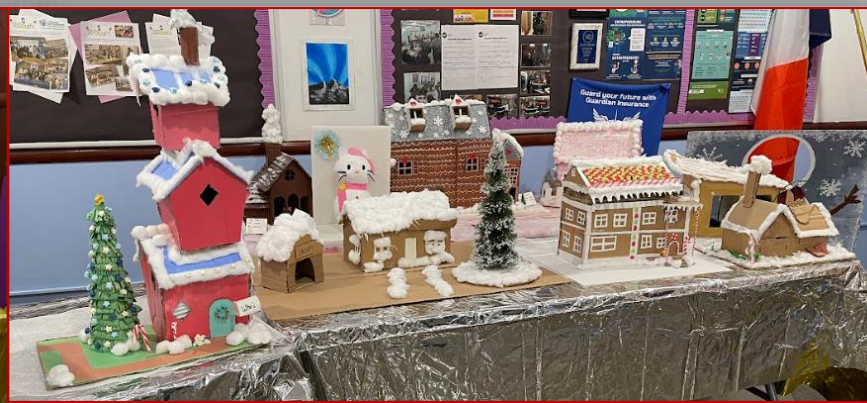
Best in Show- "Ginger Things" by Nataly, Ivanny, Belen & Phoenix 49 votes cast for them

Most I Want to Live There- "Mickey's Winter Wonderland" by Rosemery, Stella, Pamela & Mariah

Most I Don't know what this is, BUT I really like it- "Disaster" by Rubi & Kaicy

Thanks to all of you who voted!
Ms. D





In the Spotlight

During the last two days prior to the holiday break; the JKO staff spread the holiday cheers during their holiday gathering after school and the Secret Santa gift exchange.

Additionally, Ms. Garcia brought in donuts and coffee for everyone and served it!

A BIG thank you to COSA (Okwabi and Kadison) for the staff gathering and gift exchange and Ms.

Garcia for the wonderful treats!!!

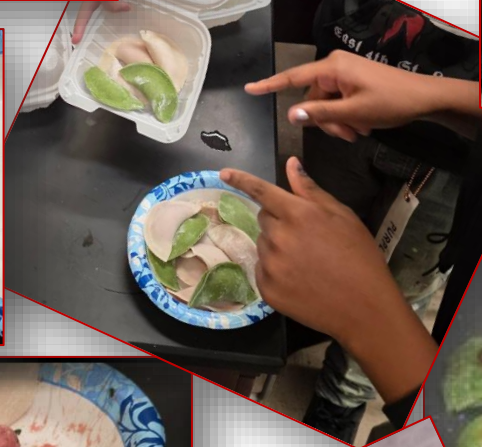
Spread Holiday Cheer this Season...



In the Spotlight



On Thursday, December 11, 2025, Senior Council and Student Government conducted a dumpling make and eat event where students created their own dumplings from scratch, cooked them, and ate them!!! The event was a delicious success!!! A BIG thank you to Ms. Okwabi and Ms. Kadison for spearheading this event.





On Wednesday Dec 10th 3:30 PM - NHS presented, "Evening with Elves" - cocoa, gingerbread houses, cookies, holiday tattoos, holiday music and snowmen! The fundraiser was a smashing success full of Santa's helpers!!!

