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# Newsletter

30th Avenue School – Inclusion. Inquiry. Responsibility.

FALL ISSUE

## First Day of School at Q300!









**FROM TOP: Vivek 201 and Freya 202; Lincoln 101 and Waverly 401; Annika 302; Stella 401 and Nadia K1; Eli 202; Josephine 501, Dalia 501, Irene 501, Nylise 502, and Emma 502; Darius 502; Caroline 101; Violet 202; Pace K1; Loic 202; Amisha 501 and Carrie 502.**

Read Bill's 2018-2019 welcome letter:

Dear Q300 Families,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year. I want to extend a special greeting to all that are new to our community. Q300 is such a special place and I am confident that you will quickly observe the great work that is taking place within and outside of our classrooms. Our teachers are amazing and they dove right into their work to ensure a successful year for our kids. Thanks to the support of the PTA, this year our staff was able to begin much of its professional learning during the summer. Although we focused on many important topics, our comprehensive social and emotional program was at the center of that learning. Most of our teachers and other staff participated and by the first day of school they had already completed four days of Responsive Classroom training.

This school year also marks a watershed in that Q300 year has now entered its fifth year!! Some of our very first students have moved into our upper division building and are beginning their middle school experience. Needless to say, this is all very exciting. In addition to all of their academic and social-emotional learning these students, as well as all others, will have the opportunity to experience some very cool enrichment opportunities. Again, these would not be possible without your generous support. For example, students in kindergarten through grade four will receive technology and Spanish language instruction, visual art, music, and chess. Some K-4 students will receive dance or creative movement while others, in second grade, will get access to an architecture program. At our upper division, fifth grade through eighth grade students will also receive technology, Spanish language instruction, and art. Fifth graders will begin an instrumental program while the rest will have access to a combination of school and PTA provided enrichment opportunities. Some of these include debate, math, and robotics clubs. As you can see, the learning that take place is multifaceted and is the direct result of great teamwork.

Over the course of my career as an educator I have discovered that each school year is very different. The opportunity to reset and reflect during the summer months and the evolved dynamics of new relationships all offer hope of growth and new perspectives. I am so confident and hopeful that we will all hold hands and work together during the course of this year to ensure that our students continue to learn about the core values of inquiry, inclusion, and responsibility. Our mutual goal is to ensure that they truly love to learn.

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## Fourth Grade Trip to Alley Pond





By Dalia Farraj and Eva Nelson-Torres

At Alley pond park on June 13, we had a great time and did many fun team building activities. At the beginning, we did a couple activities as a grade, and after that, we got split up into groups. To get into our groups, we each got a piece of paper with an animal on it. Then, without using words or showing each other our papers, we had to split up into groups by making the sound of our animal. That was a lot of fun.

In our groups, we got to do 2 or 3 ice breaker games to start off our adventure. First we played red light green light with a twist (no spoilers). After that we played cross the river. At around eleven thirty we went to eat lunch.

During lunch, we ate and also got to climb the smaller rock wall and play in the playground.

After lunch, we split back up into our groups and we did some of the adventure courses. All of the adventure courses were based off of teamwork, either you helped the people do it or you held the harness. Our favorite one is called the flying squirrel, in that, you get attached to a rope and everybody else in your group pulls the rope so you go higher.

All and all, Alley Pond Park was our favorite trip of the year:)

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## Our First Days at the Middle School

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By Myriam Kebe and Jack Kuniya

Our names are Myriam and Jack. We are 5th graders at the Q300 Middle School. We are not fully in elementary school but not fully in the middle school yet. This is the year when we get ready for real middle school which begins next year in sixth grade. The year in middle school so far has been really quite pleasant. We would like to share our experience. There are two classes in the fifth grade and the teachers are Jessica Huang, our Math and Science teacher, and Jaimie Ellerbrock, our reading, writing, and social studies teacher. They are both very kind teachers and help people when needed. The other classes we have are music, art, Spanish and of course we have lunch/recess. The year is amazing because we get to see school from a different perspective. We like that we get to travel in the hallways by ourselves even if there is a lot of stuff to carry around. Each morning, we look at our schedules and get anything we need from our lockers or backpacks. Recess is always great because we get to bring out sports equipment. We like computer science because we are learning how to make charts, tables and to program. Gym is fun because we get to play a lot of cool games. We get to do a lot of awesome activities for the learning and fun of it. One of the downsides to the Middle School is that there is a lot of HOMEWORK!! We could also do without the 5 flights of stairs. It is really PAINFUL!!! So far, everything is running smoothly and we're looking forward to the rest of the year!

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**Meet Kan Chou:**

# Upper Division Science Teacher



Interview by Neerja Vasishtha

## **Can you tell us a little about your teaching background and what you're teaching this year at Q300?**

I went to Hofstra University as a double major in Biology and Science Education, and graduated as a certified teacher. My first position was a full-year leave replacement at Forest Hills High School, where I taught Living Environment Regents (grades 9 & 10) and Forensic Science (grades 11 & 12). FHHS didn't have an opening for me the following year, but I am fortunately now teaching Living Environment Regents here at Q300! I also teach Health to the 7th and 8th graders.

## **How would you describe your teaching philosophy?**

I believe that students deserve to know what science is, as well as how and why it works. I like to incorporate opportunities for students to show their thinking--in either written or verbal form--into each class, as it allows them to interact with the content and integrate it with what they already know. I've

always liked the philosophy that Jane Addams had--that schools are inseparable from the larger society in which they are placed, and that any attempt to do so is unethical. Indeed, students have lives outside of school, and we should address certain aspects of those lives when given the opportunity to do so.

**What are your hopes for your students as a whole this year?**

My hope is for my students to enjoy science by engaging with the material and with each other in discussions and group work. I also hope that they understand the content and ace the Regents test at the end of the year, of course!

**Who was your favorite teacher growing up? What made them stand out for you?**

For better or worse, people tend to remember either the really good teachers or the really bad teachers they had when growing up. Fortunately, I had a lot more of the former. One of my favorite teachers, Mr. Brenner, taught AP Music Theory in high school (he's retired now!), which was definitely the best class I ever took. Mr. Brenner was obviously happy to be in the classroom with us, and always had a positive attitude. He was able to strike a perfect balance between leniency and seriousness, which made the class that much closer.

**How did you decide to become a teacher?**

I feel as though a lot of teachers have a pivotal moment in which they definitely knew that teaching was the profession for them, but I don't have such a story. I just knew that I didn't want to be stuck in a cubicle all day--I wanted to work with people, and I had the good fortune of having decent teachers growing up. I combined the two, and decided on education when I was still in high school. I guess you could say that my journey to teaching was more of a *gradual* development than a *punctuated equilibrium* (evolution joke).

**What Q300 policy or approach resonates with you the most?**

Beyond that strong sense of community at Q300, as evidenced by the buses that the PTA arranges, I like the focus on the student as a whole. That is to say, the students' schedules aren't filled with just the core subjects, but also have an advisory and elective period to explore team-building and social communication.

**What do you like to do in your free time? Do you want to tell us anything about your family and where you are from?**

I was born and raised in Nassau County, and have always had at least 1 cat at any given time. The current lineup is 3 fat cats/1 skinny cat. I have a younger brother who has always been smarter than me, and I sometimes play guitar with a friend from FHHS. On the weekends, I can be found volunteering with my local fire department as an EMT (we all have to get our thrills somewhere)

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## **Meet Kasia: Second Grade Teacher**



Interview by Amanda Spielman

### **Where are you from and where do you live now?**

I was born in a small town in Poland about 2 hours from Krakow. At the age of 6 I moved to New Jersey and lived there until I attended college. I currently reside in Kew Garden Hills.

### **How long have you been a teacher?**

This is my fourth year as a teacher. I taught Kindergarten for a year in New Jersey. I was also a para professional in fourth grade self-contained and general education classes. This is my third year with the NYDOE.

### **What do you love about teaching?**

**What do you love about teaching?**

What I love about teaching is the light bulbs that go off throughout the day. My favorite part is watching how the students have grown throughout the year and celebrating all of their accomplishments.

**Did you always want to be a teacher?**

When I was little I used to play teacher with kids younger than me. I had my own chalkboard, stickers, stamps and worksheets always ready! That dream all started around first or second grade. So I guess you can say I am fulfilling my life dream every year.

**What are you most excited for this year at Q300? Do you have a favorite subject?**

I am excited about being an active member of our community and being part of the service learning project! I am very big on volunteering and charity work! My favorite subjects are reading and writing. I am currently working on my Masters as a Literacy Specialist.

**What are your hobbies, things you like to do outside of teaching?**

Outside of teaching I love to sing and dance. I was part of many different choirs through my life. I also ballroom danced for nine years and did wedding choreography. I love to be outdoors hiking or camping. I love to play sports and be active. I spend a lot of time with family and friends, mostly on the weekends! I love game nights!| **END:IF** |\*

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**Meet the Parents, Lower Division:  
Kim and Marcus**





By Neerja Vasishta

*I often hear (and agree!) that our Q300 parent body is full of some wonderful people. However, we don't always get to know each other. Enter "Meet the Parents," a new section in our newsletter in which we get to know a few families. Want to learn more about someone? Please email their names to [newsletter@q300pta.org](mailto:newsletter@q300pta.org).*

**Where do you live?**

We live in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

**Tell us about yourselves—what do you do professionally?**

We are both Architects. Kim works at Robert A.M. Stern Architects. Her work is primarily institutional, focused on campus master plans and buildings for K-12 and higher education. Marcus is a partner at Object Territories, a design firm based in New York and Hong Kong, which works across different scales, with residential, cultural and regional design projects.

\*| **IF:ARCHIVE\_PAGE** |\*

**How did you both meet?**

We met 18 years ago at the University of Kansas where we studied Architecture. This was when Marcus was in his final year and Kim was a junior. We shared a few classes together but did not cross paths until near the end of our programs. After graduating, we then each moved to New York City.

**How long has your child been at Q300?**

Lucas is almost seven years old and in second grade in Stephanie's class. He has attended Q300 since kindergarten.

**Why did you choose Q300 for your child?**

We chose Q300 because of its (comparatively) relaxed environment, the inquiry-based learning, focus on inclusion and creative project-based class setting. We hoped Q300 would provide an environment in which he would be inspired, have time to create while learning, and be challenged to discover new things.

## **What are your favorite family activities to do together at home? Away from home?**

Our family is fairly relaxed and spends time on weekends “doing nothing,” informal activities to balance out Lucas' busy school and after-school schedule. This includes reading, drawing, playing, creating things, and making up things. The topic-du-jour is Pokémon, about which Lucas is attempting to educate us. We spend time with friends, explore the city, and visit gardens, parks and museums to see nature and art. With family abroad and our interests in architecture and cities, we love to travel and see new places and revisit old ones. Lucas has become an avid traveler starting with his first trip to Asia for his first birthday.

## **Thinking about your and your child's experience at Q300, would you like to share a glow and/or grow?**

We really appreciate the diversity of the student body at Q300. The fact that the families are so varied in where they are from certainly enriches the Q300 experience. Yet we are all brought together by a common goal to provide an inspiring environment for our child(ren).

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## **Meet the Parents, Upper Division: Erin and Eric**



By Neerja Vasishta

*I often hear (and agree!) that our Q300 parent body is full of some wonderful people. However, we don't always get to know each other. Enter "Meet the Parents," a new section in our newsletter in which we get to know a few families. Want to learn more about someone? Please email their names to [newsletter@q300pta.org](mailto:newsletter@q300pta.org).*

### **Where do you live?**

We live with our four children in Astoria, Queens.

### **Tell us about yourselves—what do you do professionally?**

Erin is a Costume Designer who teaches in the Undergraduate Drama Department at New York University and works as a freelance costume designer for the puppets on Sesame Street. Chances are, if you have seen Elmo in his pajamas, Erin made them! Eric works for Scholastic Media in their television division, helping to produce shows like "The Magic School Bus" and "Clifford the Big Red Dog". In addition to being a 7th grader at Q300, Lyla is also a kidpreneur and has her own plush toy line of good monsters that help keep all those scary monsters out of your closets. If you wander by the Brass Owl on Ditmars, you will see them for sale, or you can check them out at [www.lylatov.com](http://www.lylatov.com)

### **How did you meet?**

Erin and Eric met Erin's first day living in New York City, while they were both working for the Jim Henson Company. Which, I guess, actually makes their four children "muppet babies"!

### **How long have your children been at Q300? What are your children's names, ages, and grades?**

We have four children. Lyla (12), Quinn (10), Tessa (7) and Emmett (4) Black. Lyla is in her 2nd year at Q300 and is currently a 7th grader.

### **Why did you choose Q300 for your child?**

Lyla was enrolled in STEM, the citywide G&T program at PS85 since kindergarten. She may have been the only child in her class for whom PS85 was actually her zoned school -- as we lived right across the street! We were part of the early parent group that fought for a K-8 citywide option in Queens. In addition to the fact that most of Lyla's classmates were going to Q300 for middle school, Eric and I were drawn to the project based and team learning philosophy. Lyla was drawn to the low homework policy:).

### **What are your favorite family activities to do together at home? Away from home?**

We all love the arts! We do a lot of drawing, painting and craft activities at home. We also play board games and have epic dance parties in the living room. My children all love books and reading is also a favorite pastime around

room. My children all love books and reading is also a favorite pastime around here. We love to see theatre and take in as many shows as we can.

**Thinking about your and your child's experience at Q300, would you like to share a glow and/or grow?**

Lyla has had a fantastic middle school experience at Q300 so far. Without a doubt, I can say that the teachers make the school. Lyla is challenged academically and honestly enjoys her classmates. The teachers really set the tone for a love of learning and a positive, respectful environment where kids feel empowered and supported. Lyla has enjoyed being on the Debate Team. I love that it has given her a chance to meet and work with students from other grade levels. The fact that Mr. Cho is willing to give up several Saturdays of his own time to take the team to tournaments speaks volumes of the commitment teachers at the school have. I am honestly hard pressed to give a solid "grow". No school will ever be perfect and certainly they all have things they could do better. For me, it has never been about finding the "perfect" school, but rather finding a school that fits my individual child perfectly. I can say that Q300 does that for us.

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## Q300 Chess Team Tournament Schedule



By Mark Schroffner

The Q300 Chess Team will attend the following home and away tournaments in the 2019-2020 school year. Nearly all tournaments will be sponsored with a

in the 2018-2019 school year. Nearly all tournaments will be supported with a team room for parents and students, as well as coaching and game analysis by NYChessKids, who runs the after school program at Q300 on Mondays and Wednesdays. Team shirts are also available and we are pending a bulk order.

2018

11/11 – Q300

11/18 – NEST+m (LES)

12/09 – PS6

2019

1/5-6 – City (Brooklyn)

1/10 – Q300

3/10-11 – States (Saratoga)

5/5 – Q300

5/10-12 – Nationals (Nashville)

In addition to the above for the large group, we attend several other tournaments individually and in small groups.

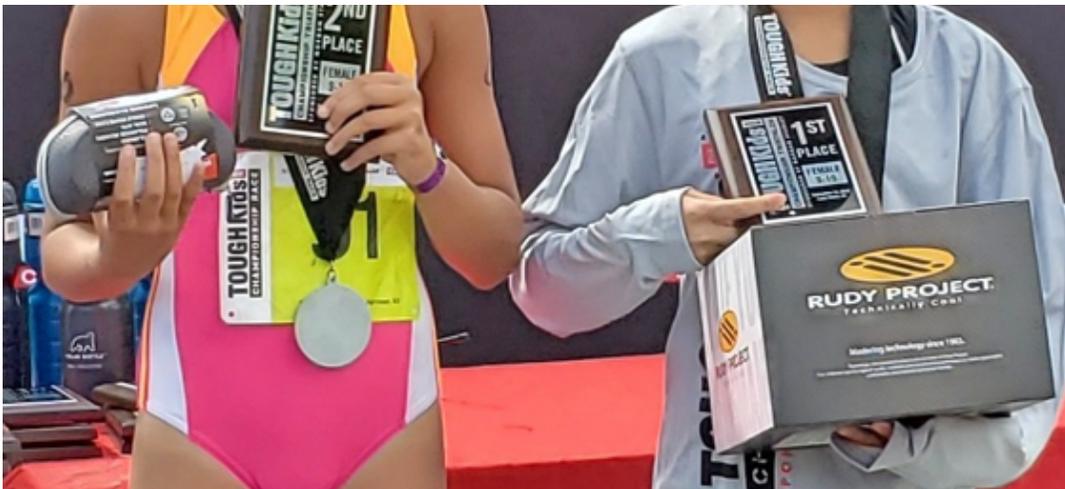
If you were not able to attend our first home tournament on 11/11, you are welcome to email or text Mark Schroffner ([markschroffner@yahoo.com](mailto:markschroffner@yahoo.com) or 347.546.2983) or Luke Lukose ([llukose@yahoo.com](mailto:llukose@yahoo.com)) for more details about what to expect, levels of involvement, and the Q300 chess adventure in general.

Aside from tournament registration costs and travel, there is no extra cost to join us!

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## Q300 Sisters Win at TOUGHKids Triathlon





By Mojill Tan

On Sept 15, 2018, Sisters Shanel Tan (502) and Herschel Tan (301) dominated the 2018 Toughkid Triathlon Championship Race held at Stony Point, NY. Shanel finished in first place in the 9-10 age group and Herschel finished in second place in the 7-8 years old age group. Shanel took home a medal, first-place plaque, and bike helmet as prizes. Herschel received a medal, a second-place plaque, and cycling sunglasses. TOUGHKids Triathlon is held annually with youth triathletes ages 4-14 years old. The 7-8 and 9-10 age group swim 100 yards, bike 2 miles and run .5 mi. [Registration is open now](#) for next year's race on September 14, 2019.

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## STE(A)M Year Comes to Q300

By Lynn Kennedy

*“3,2,1 [Nasa]Station, this is Q300. How do you hear me? This is Station...loud and clear”*

Wouldn't it be great if students could talk with an astronaut aboard the International Space Station about what it is like to live and work in space? Well, they can!

Wennie Chen, parent of Ethan in the Third grade, and Lynn Kennedy, parent to Nicolas in the Second grade, have been coordinating with our school's administration to apply for a downlink in flight education to take place between March and October 2019. A successful application would allow all of our students, K-8, to pose questions that would be asked in a 20 minute session with the Astronauts and watch as astronauts answer the questions and demonstrate science, technology, engineering and mathematics concepts in ways that are impossible on Earth.

Space exploration—which really took off in the 1950s—is still beneficial for developments in Communications, Medicine, Information Technology, Health, Environmental Studies, Public Safety and inventions like Memory Foam.

Not only will our Q300 community have the chance to meet astronauts via Skype, but will use inquiry-based learning to answer questions this school year to prepare for a school-wide science fair in May. Students will develop projects and showcase them, tapping into their potential to develop ideas for the future, solve problems, and potentially increase their enthusiasm for science, engineering and mathematics. Curiosity will be encouraged through hands-on experiments while our students prepare for the future.

If you would like to help with the Science Fair, know speakers who might come to a classroom to offer related topics or other support, or have a great keynote speaker for the (potential) downlink event, please contact [lynnk@q300pta.org](mailto:lynnk@q300pta.org).

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## Coffee with Principal Bill

By Sue Sekar

On Friday, October 5th, around 20 parents joined Bill, Sonita and Jenny in the auditorium for the first 'Coffee With Bill' meeting of the year. Bill gave some opening remarks and announcements followed by an open forum for questions. A wide array of topics were covered, from classroom topics like reading groups, Middle School science, grab'n'go breakfast bags and parent in-classroom volunteering all the way up to broader educational/policy issues like De Blasio's school diversity initiative and Specialized High School topics. The meetings are open to all members of our parent body (and there may be opportunities to have more targeted sessions for particular grades or classes later in the year if needed). Thanks to Bill for engaging with the community in this way.

## Read-a-Thon Success!

By Claire Lui

This summer's Read-A-Thon had Q300 kids reading up a storm! We raised more than \$7,700 with donations from friends and families. Almost 100% of the money raised goes toward the PTA Budget, which funds Teaching Assistants and many of the enrichment classes for all the grades, including the music program for every grade.

Second grade won a pizza party for the lower school with 40% class participation and fifth grade won in the upper school! Thank you to Hong Van Tieu for setting up the online book fair with Children's Bookstore.

And though this year's Read-A-Thon is over, you can still continue to support the school when buying books:

**Gallery Night**  
**Friday, November 16th.**  
This evening fundraising event is a chance for parents and other adults in the Q300 community to socialize over wine and light food at an art gallery in Chelsea, child-free. Friends and family welcome. Information and tickets available [here](#).

Buying online through the site [www.childrensbookstore.com/welcome/q300-book-fair/](http://www.childrensbookstore.com/welcome/q300-book-fair/) will give 15% back to the PTA and 30% during certain designated weeks throughout the year.

Or buy in person at any of four branches of Book Culture (three in Manhattan and one in Long Island City) and mention that you are a Q300 family and the PTA will receive 15% of the total in sales.

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## Community Affairs Fundraising

By Lynn Kennedy

Often we hear about the funds raised from the Direct Appeal or the Auction Party in the spring, which are vital to sustaining the expenses for enrichments, Teacher Assistants, teacher wishlists and offsetting other expenses. The PTA Community Affairs has worked the last few years behind the scenes advocating for funds from our Electeds that also benefit the school. The funds are called Capital Discretionary Funding which are funds used to describe money that isn't designated for a particular purpose. It's up to the people in charge, in this case many of our Electeds, to decide how discretionary funds should be spent. Discretionary comes from the word discretion, which can be used to mean "the right to decide something based on one's own judgment." Funds we have received have come from Councilman Costantinides, Borough President Melinda Katz and Assemblywoman Simotas.

More specifically, Capital Discretionary Funding includes 'Resolution A' and 'Participatory Budget'.

Each year, during the budget process, Members of the Council assign discretionary funds to capital projects to meet local needs and fill gaps in City Agency projects. This is Reso A.

Council Members also use Participatory Budgeting to decide how to spend a certain amount of Capital Discretionary funding. Those Members who choose to join Participatory Budgeting, give at least \$1 million from their budget for the whole community to participate in decision-making through a public vote. Unlike competitively-awarded Agency contracts, discretionary funds may only be awarded for a single year.

Projects that have been funded thus far with Discretionary funding for Q300 are:

Renovated play yard at MS 126/ Q300 (PB vote) FY 2016 \$250,000

Tech Grants FY2017-2019 \$195,000

UD Science lab FY 2018 \$250,000

Hydroponic lab FY 2019 \$164,000

Upgraded UD women's bathroom FY 2019 \$85,000

Upgrades to MS 126/Q300 Auditorium \$225,000

Current FY 2020 requested projects through Participatory Budget are:

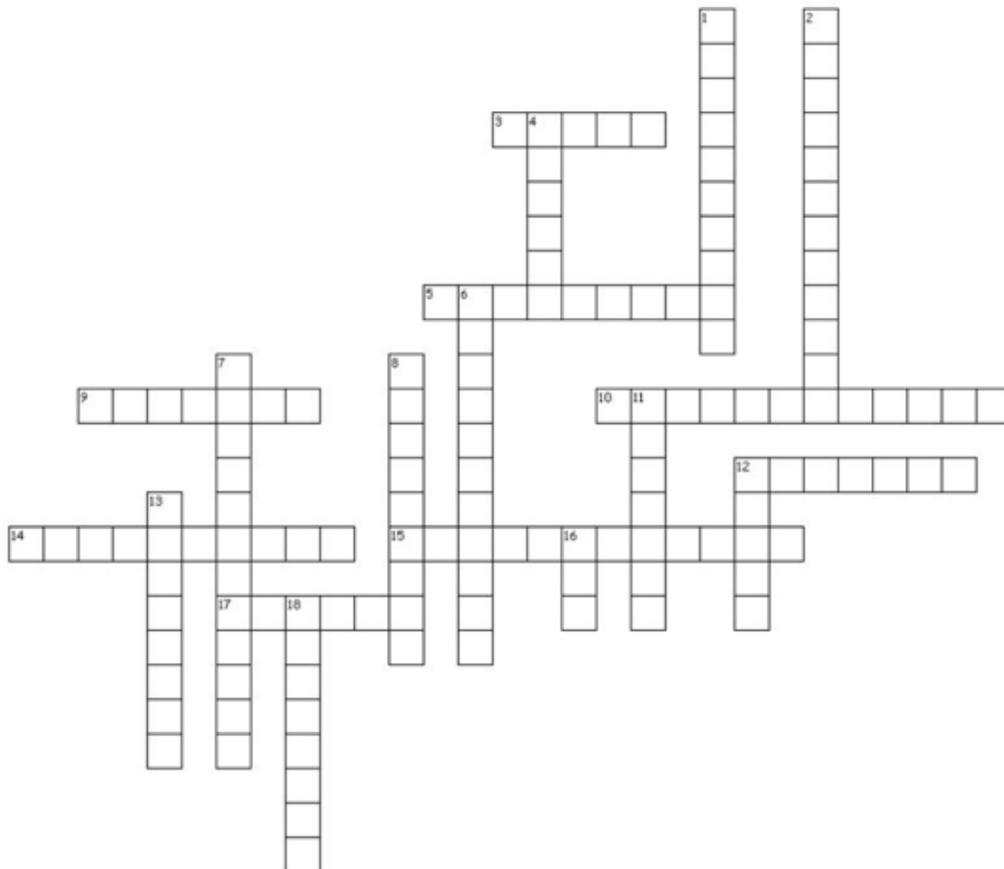
Co-located library at the LD Campus

Split air conditioning units at the UD campus Auditorium and Cafeteria

For further questions contact: [lynnk@q300pta.org](mailto:lynnk@q300pta.org)

## Crossword Puzzle

### Q300 - Know Your School



By Maria Carrasco

ACROSS

3. Name of PTA Co-President.

5. Where Q300 parents can volunteer to share their experiences at the middle school with prospective students and families.
9. The part of your food packaging that gives a little money back to the school.
10. An adult only PTA event where parents get to socialize.
12. Name of PTA Co-President.
14. When students and teachers try and look their best and parent volunteers comb a lot of hair.
15. The holiday where buying pies helps the school.
17. If you participate in this you have a chance to win a prize.

#### DOWN

1. This organization gets our students up and moving to the beat.
2. Fun party where ghouls and princesses attend and parents volunteer.
4. The website where you can shop on-line and earn money for the school.
6. Neighborhood restaurant that gives money back to the school if you dine there on special days.
7. A site where parents can exchange ideas and ask questions with other parents.
8. Parents can join one of these to help support the school and plan events.
11. On-line, silent or otherwise, this is a great way to help the school and get great items.
12. The name of our school parent coordinator.
13. The PTA creates this once a month to communicate with parents.
16. The acronym for the group of people who develop educational policies at our school.
18. A social networking website where you can share pictures and follow what is happening at the school.

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We welcome your contributions, if you have article ideas or photos for the next newsletter contact Amanda Spielman at [newsletter@q300pta.org](mailto:newsletter@q300pta.org).

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