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Newsletter

30th Avenue School – Inclusion. Inquiry. Responsibility.

NOVEMBER 2021 ISSUE

The calendar year is rapidly coming to a close, and while for many of us it has been a bittersweet year - lost opportunities to see loved ones, hang out with friends in-person, and meet new acquaintances - we also have much to be thankful for as we reflect on the past year. Our kids' excitement at being back in school full time and together with friends, teachers, and Q300 staff has been palpable, and the safe return of many activities that define their childhood - sports, music, fun group projects, and even Halloween traditions - have given us hope that there is much more to come for our kids and our community over the next few months.

Take a few minutes to read the [welcome letter from our Q300 PTA co-Presidents](#) and the [note of thanks from Principal Sonita](#). Check out [the joy on our students' faces](#) as they celebrated Halloween and outings with family and classmates. [Meet Lisa Christopher, co-VP of Fundraising](#), and then [learn about the many fundraising events](#) that happened this Fall. Need ideas on what to do as the weather gets cooler and over winter break? We've got you covered with [fun day and weekend trip destinations](#). Finally, [meet Ms. Ali's adorable addition to her family](#) and get a peek into [what some of our kids and parents are thankful for](#) this year.

Co-Presidents' Welcome Letter to the Community

Dear Q300 Community,

November is already here, there is a chill in the air, many of the fall/winter holidays are

upon us, and school is well underway. Many of us entered the school year with trepidation. For some of us, we were just starting to come out of pandemic isolation, making adjustments and grieving from losses, and were still unsure of what this year would be like. While we are still contending with the ongoing pandemic, there seems to be a bright light that all of our kids are back with their peers and many more are getting vaccinated, even if there is still much uncertainty and anxiety.

No matter where you are on the spectrum of this transition, we welcome you. We especially want to extend a warm welcome to and look forward to meeting our kindergarten parents and other new families one day in-person. For now, we encourage everyone to come to PTA meetings virtually, participate in smaller community gatherings and school events when available in-person, and if comfortable, to continue to familiarize yourselves with our great community and everything it has to offer.

Every year, the PTA works very closely with our administration to help the school thrive no matter what the situation. Principal Sonita Ramkishun has been an amazing leader, stepping into this role under unprecedented circumstances and modeling ways to reassess unpredictable situations with calm, discretion, and ease. As we continue into new and unknown territory, we will continue to support her and the outstanding and incredible teachers that work with our children. Throughout it all, our school community remains committed to the mission of the school and its core values of inclusion, responsibility, and inquiry to ground our ways forward.

This year, our PTA continues to support this commitment through funding enrichment (music and visual arts), safety supplies (masks and air purifiers), wish lists for teachers, financial support for grade-level community building, Debate and Math Teams, stepping up and graduation events, professional development for teachers, and so much more. We will also continue to create in-person and virtual events that bring people together in our own community as well as with our co-located schools.

While we had so many highlights and surprises last year about what we were able to accomplish during the pandemic, this year seems to be no different! In this short time, we have already organized read-a-thons, pie sales, a small auction, flower sales, gift card sales, and more to raise funds for our school, and are about to launch our Direct Appeal. We addressed the health and safety needs of our community through the organization of COVID mobile testing vans to come to our schools' vicinity and a virtual information session on COVID safety and vaccinations. We will celebrate our teachers and staff with a luncheon provided by one of our parent's restaurants. Even amidst political changes and educational shifts, we are interacting with our local politicians and leaders to advocate for one school building for the whole school.

It takes a team to build and execute this vision and we are indebted to our hard-working, passionate, and committed board members! We congratulate the incoming board

members, particularly new members Amy Wong, Xin Li, Takila Oku, Sonia Martins, Ellie Rabinovich Buchalter, Lisa Christopher, Rachana Shah, and Nicholas Skolnick. Thank you for stepping in and we are so excited to work with you. We also welcome and appreciate all of our class parents, new and old, as we couldn't do half of what we do without you. We are grateful for your stepping up to help keep folks connected. Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank Jenny Lando, our fearless parent coordinator, who liaises between us and all things school. It truly takes a village.

Looking ahead, we hope to feast at our annual International Potluck or dance the day away at our Steppin' Into Summer Auction, but only when it is safe to do so. For now, we encourage grade levels to get together to nurture those friendships on a smaller scale. Thank YOU parents and caregivers, for your continued support. Remember, we are all part of the PTA and we cannot do any of this without you. Whether you translate a document, help out at an event, make a flyer, volunteer in a classroom, or launch a new committee, we cannot do this work alone and our kids depend on your support.

With gratitude,

Lynn Kennedy and Maria Hantzopoulos
PTA co-Presidents

Fall and Winter Festivities, Here We Come!

See how Halloween and Q300's Character Day offered opportunities for students (and parents) to let their alter egos loose, and the fun memories students made through cultural and day trip destinations.





Top row: Fourth graders Aryaan (with his brother), Lincoln, Justin, Gabriel, and Wesley enjoying Halloween activities

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Middle row, left: Nicolas (5th grade) and Ziyad (5th grade) trick or treating on Halloween.

*Middle row, right: Reyna (1st grade) in her costume for Character Day as the "Red-Alternate Universe Girl" from the Christian Robinson book *Another*.*

Bottom row: Eric and Elliot (3rd grade) and Emily (5th grade) with the energy to overwhelm their mom and dad.





Top: Liam (3rd grade) marveling at the displays at Legoland New York.

Bottom: April (1st grade) enjoying the NYC Winter Lantern Festival at Snug Harbor Cultural Center.



Above: Tyler (7th grade), Liam (7th grade), Niko (7th grade), Ben (7th grade), Isaac (5th grade), and "Benny the Mage" having fun after an afternoon of trick or treating.



Left: Second grade families enjoying a fun day hiking and doing a scavenger hunt.



Above: Elliott (5th grade), Darius (4th grade), Isaac (5th grade), and first graders Abel, Stefan, and Posy dressed up and ready for Halloween festivities.

A Note from Principal Sonita



As we enter this season of gratitude, I want to take this opportunity to say how thankful I am for our students, teachers, staff, parents, and community. These past couple of months have been unpredictable, but as a school community, we have continued to bond together and support each other through it all.

To the students at Q300, thank you for bringing joy, laughter, and life back to our hallways and classrooms. Thank you to our parents who support our school and work collaboratively as partners to ensure every child meets their best potential. Thank you to our PTA for their drive and efforts to provide our school with funds and anything we may need to have a successful school year.

To our teachers, thank you for always going above and beyond for our students and supporting them socially and emotionally as they enter a new school year. Thank you to all of our support staff members who work diligently to ensure the safety of all our students throughout the day. Thank you to our parent coordinator for supporting parents and finding answers to all their questions. Thank you to my administrators who work alongside me to support all of our students and staff.

Thank you to the Q300 community for being patient and understanding. I know sometimes it may be difficult when there are so many unknowns within a school year, but I appreciate that our community can trust that we at Q300 will always put health and safety first, and make the best decision for our students, staff, and parents. We will always be Q300Strong!

Lastly, during this holiday season, I wish all the best to our families. May it be filled with happiness, love, joy, and peace.

Giving Thanks for Your Fundraising Support

Written by Lisa Christopher and Susie Stewart, co-VPs of Fundraising

It has been a busy fall of fundraising. From the extension of our Summer Read-A-Thon to Q300 Blooms to our much anticipated Thanksgiving Pie Sale, we have been busy bringing back our annual PTA fundraisers as well as creating new traditions. We even managed to sneak in a Fall Auction Special!

We want to give a special thank you to all families that contribute to these fundraisers. We want to thank YOU for raising the funds that go into the educational experience of our children! Thank you to all who spread the word about these fundraisers, whether by word of mouth or posting on Facebook/social media! Most importantly, thank you to everyone donating their time, skills, and expertise in making these Q300 PTA fundraisers a success!

Summer Read-A-Thon

Thanks to our readers and participants, we raised over \$1,300! Special thanks to the following students, who participated in our Flipgrid book review:

- Preston (2nd grade): *Judy Moody Was in a Mood* by Megan McDonald
- Kaiyune (2nd grade): *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling
- Nicholas (2nd grade): *Matilda* by Roald Dahl
- Hudson (3rd grade): *Cat Ninja* by Matthew Cody
- Nicolas (5th grade): *Fish in a Tree* by Linda Hunt and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney
- Erika (5th grade): *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup* by Sharon Creech

Q300 Blooms

Your purchase of flower bulbs for fall plantings (and spring blooms) helped us raise approximately \$1,250. Please send photos of your beautiful Spring gardens to fundraising@q300pta.org - we would love to see them!

Fall Q300 PTA Auction

Special thanks to Dan Bach, who donated two Grandstand tickets to Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and two Grandstand tickets to the NYC Marathon tickets. We raised about \$600! Congratulations to the winners of the auction!

Thanksgiving Pie Sale

Thanksgiving isn't Thanksgiving without our annual pie sale. This year, we sold about 200 pies! Special thanks to La Guli Bakery of Astoria and Q300 parent Zeke Mandel of Betty Bakery for participating in the Thanksgiving Pie Sale.

Q300 Strong T-Shirts

Back by popular demand, we brought back the Q300 Strong 2021 Limited Edition T-Shirt for purchase and sold over 300 shirts! If you are interested in volunteering to pack and distribute t-shirts in early December, please contact fundraising@q300pta.org

NYC COVID-19 Vaccine Referral Program

If you (or your child, family members, or friends) are getting the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination, you have the opportunity to support the Q300 PTA at the same time if you get vaccinated at a city-run vaccination site or an in-home vaccination. Just make an appointment at <https://nyc.gov/vax4nyc> and select "Q300 Parent-Teacher Association" as the name of the organization that referred you. To date, the Q300 PTA has received 88 referrals - that's \$8,800! Thank YOU! In addition, all individuals who get their first dose at a city-run vaccination site or in-home will receive \$100 gift cards from the city.

Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

Special thanks to Q300 parent Rami Motiyr of Flavors for donating food for the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon!

Meet Baby Madelyn, the Newest Addition to the Q300 Family

Wishing the best to Ms. Ali and her new baby, Madelyn!



Ideas for Fall and Winter Destinations

Written by Alvin Yoo

The holiday season is almost upon us and there will be a plethora of vacation days to figure out how to keep our children (and ourselves) entertained. The following list is a compilation of events and places recommended by parents in the Q300 community to help ease the burden of figuring out plans for the upcoming breaks. We hope that you will be safe and healthy during this time!

Recommendations from Christina L., kindergarten parent:

[New York Botanical Gardens | Holiday Train Show](#)

Where: Bronx, NY

When: Nov. 20th - Jan. 23rd

Cost: See website

[COVID precautions](#)

[Untermeyer Gardens Conservancy | Grand Holiday Illumination](#)

Where: Yonkers, NY

When: Dec. 10th - Jan. 2nd

Cost: Free

[COVID precautions](#)

[Bronx Zoo | Holiday Lights](#)

Where: Bronx, NY

When: Nov. 19th - Jan. 9th

Cost: See website

[COVID precautions](#)

Recommendation from Alisha A., 1st grade parent:

Our family booked a pre-Christmas winter trip to D.C. to spend our pre-holidays at the Waterfront District at National Harbor. They've put together a lot of really amazing family events and activities geared toward the holiday. Some of these activities include fireworks, a festive light show, holiday movies, "Cirque Dreams Holidaze" stage show, holiday story time, ice skating, snow tubing, ice bumper cars, and so much more. Also, if you book a stay at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention center, some of the really great family activities are comped and you can attend as a part of your accommodations. Links to the National Harbor site and list of activities below:

National Harbor info: <https://www.nationalharbor.com/>

Events info: <https://www.nationalharbor.com/events/annual-events/holidays/>

More events info: <https://tickets.gaylordnational.com/default.asp>

Accommodations: <https://christmasatgaylordnational.marriott.com/amp>

Recommendation from Heather C., 2nd grade parent:

In honor of Native American Heritage Month, I would highly recommend visiting the Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center. It could be a day visit from New York City or this could be part of a perfect combination to Mystic, CT for a weekend.

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation is a federally recognized American Indian tribe in the state of Connecticut. They are descended from the Pequot people, an Algonquian-language tribe that dominated the southern New England coastal areas. The Museum has been owned and operated by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation since its establishment in 1998. It is one of the major resources on the history of Native American culture in the Northeast. Multiple exhibits, in conjunction with the museum's interactive programs, make it a delight for kids of all ages! Due to the sheer size of the museum, COVID social distancing protocols are easy to follow. My kids, who are 4.5 and 7 years old, loved the museum and have asked to visit again.

For more information, please check out <https://www.pequotmuseum.org>.

Getting to Know Your PTA Board

This is an occasional series featuring members of the PTA Board. While much of the work

of the PTA happens behind the scenes, we want to recognize members of our community that give their time so willingly to the PTA.

Meet Lisa Christopher, co-VP of Fundraising

Interview by Fiona Yung



Tell us a little bit about yourself, your Q300 students, and your family.

Hi, I'm Lisa Christopher. My husband, Neil, and I have three children, Averie in third grade, Madison in first grade, and Aiden, who is in daycare. We reside in Forest Hills, Queens and love meeting the Q300 community even all the way out here. I am an architectural designer by trade. We enjoy family vacations, collecting seashells, eating good food, and more recently, cooking together.

This is your first year as a PTA Board member. How did you become interested in joining the PTA Board, and why did you run for a co-VP of Fundraising position?

To be honest, being on the PTA Board wasn't even on my radar. In all my time at Q300, I've only attended a handful of PTA meetings. A fellow Q300 parent who was on the Board asked me to consider it. If there was ever a time to pitch in and help out our school, I felt that it was now, so I jumped in. I mean, it's for our kids, so let's do this! Having a co-VP made it less intimidating (shout out to Susie Stewart, who was on the Board last year). I am SO impressed by all of the behind-the-scenes work that happens in the PTA. How do

these people do this with work and family? Somehow team work makes the dream work! Being a first year Board member, I'm still learning about how everything fits together, but it's great to hear firsthand all the topics and concerns that come up within our Q300 community and to be an active part of brainstorming or suggesting solutions.

With COVID-19, fundraising campaigns still look different from what they were before the pandemic. Despite health and safety restrictions, we have already seen some great fundraising campaigns this school year! What do you enjoy most about designing an event like Q300 Blooms (a fundraiser based around flower bulb purchases for fall planting)?

With the pandemic, we do miss social fundraisers such as the Halloween party and International Potluck, to name a couple. But in terms of social connection, I think the class parents and parents in general have done a GREAT job in organizing outdoor get togethers for the children. I think fundraisers last year in the heart of the pandemic were difficult because we were all struggling with whatever learning situation we were in (remote, hybrid, etc.). Big kudos to last year's fundraising team!

With this coming 2021 - 22 school year and the kids back at school, how do we continue to build excitement for families to invest and donate during this time? I think the Q300 community is strong and our children are so resilient, and we can do this together. I loved the Flower Power fundraiser's messaging. Sure, it's about selling flower bulbs, but it's also about "Q300 Blooms!" - that out of a pandemic, our children and our community will bloom and flourish! (For all who purchased flower bulbs, thank you! And please send us photos in the spring with your beautiful gardens!) The PTA comes up with fundraising ideas, and through teamwork, we set it in motion.

What are you most thankful for this year?

I am thankful for family. Especially for my parents being there to help out with the children during the pandemic with my husband working in the hospital. I am also thankful for our Q300 family. We are a group of parents that despite all of the other work/life things going on in our lives, are active in the growth and future of our school and our children. Even with the uncertainties we have faced during this school year with COVID protocol changes and changes to the G&T system, we have found ways to voice our opinions and be a part of the solution. Thank you to all of the parents that have sent me Google Classroom codes, Zoom links that I might've missed, and for those that raise concerns in a respectful manner on Whatsapp. Thank you for being a part of the daily grind and our Q300 community!

What Are You Thankful For This Year?

As we look forward to 2022, we asked families what they were thankful for this year. We would like to thank all of you for your support and the community you provide and create at

Q300. Our Q300 community would not be as strong and vibrant without you, your family, and everything that you bring.

As you read the comments below, take a moment to reflect on the thanks you would give for this year, and feel free to let us know your thoughts at newsletter@q300pta.org.

Reyna (1st grade student): "I am thankful for my mom and dad, my family, and that I am able to see all of my friends in school every day and we do not have to see each other on Zoom anymore."

Stefan (1st grade student): "I'm thankful for our home, which lets us have all these happy times."

Erica (1st grade parent): "I am thankful for this Q300 STRONG community!"

Liam (3rd grade student): "Thankful for the new school year! End of remote classes! Vaccine! Family and friends!"

Darius (4th grade student): "I'm thankful I live in Queens and can find great food to eat anywhere, even on the subway."

Caroline (4th grade student): "I'm thankful for our house and our family and food."

Nicolas (5th grade student): "I am thankful and happy that I could get this vaccination shot. I am relieved my family is healthy and that things are looking brighter for the future."

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