



## Meet Edwin, Q300's very own Spanish teacher!

Edwin has been teaching for four years in both high school and elementary school settings. Edwin originally went to school for business at Binghamton University. After working for several years he determined that he wanted to do something different professionally and turned to teaching, first as a substitute teacher with elementary school students. While he found that he absolutely loved working with children, he decided he wanted the experience of teaching his own students so that he could watch them grow over a full academic year.

At that point, Edwin pursued a Master's degree from Queens College where he specialized in language acquisition and became a certified teacher in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). His first permanent teaching position was at high school level. Then he shifted his focus to elementary education because he felt that he had more to offer younger students and was looking forward to participating more fully in their early development. At Q300 Edwin teaches Spanish to the kindergarteners and first graders as well as the sixth graders and he is excited by the varied experiences of working with both age groups.

Edwin teaches Spanish to the kindergarten and first grade classes in the explorations room. In a typical class he will greet the students as they settle in and oftentimes will open instruction with a song. He will deliver a lesson, for example teaching new vocabulary, and will use a projector to show the words (written in Spanish with a picture), will pronounce them, and ask students to repeat them individually. They will move on to reinforce what they have learned in group activities with three to four students. Sometimes those activities will be a game or a series of questions and answers for them to go back and forth with a partner. Edwin also facilitates two major writing projects as part of each unit.

For the sixth graders, Edwin goes into their regular class for Spanish lessons. His sixth grade curriculum has similar topics as the younger

## Upcoming News & Events

**PTA Executive Board Meeting** April 2nd, 8:30am

**IS 126 Tour**, April 2nd, 2:20 pm. Principal Willard and IS 126 Principal Alex Angueira will meet with Q300 sixth grade families at IS 126. The tour will include a visit to the cafeteria, the Q300 wing, and gymnasium.

**Spring Recess** April 3rd – 10th

District 30 **Community Education Council Meeting** April 16th 6:30 – 9:30PM PS 228, 32-65 93rd Street, E Elmhurst

**PTA General Membership Meeting** April 16, 6:30 – 7:30 Q300 Auditorium

**Bring a Pet Home**, April 18th, 1-5 pm. Please join sixth graders and Bobbi & the Strays in the Q300 courtyard, where they will be encouraging folks to adopt dogs who need a permanent home.

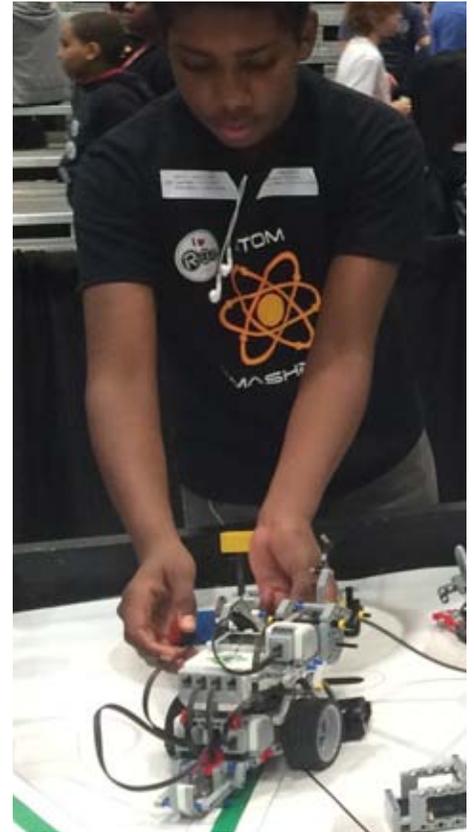
**SLT Meeting**, April 23rd, 5:30 pm

**DOE Panel for Educational Policy** meeting April 29th 6:00 – 8:00PM, MS 131, 100 Hester St, New York, NY 10002

**Q300 Year End Party and Auction** at Bohemian Hall, May 31st. Save the Date!

grades but is much more rigorous. Each thematic unit is taught to a deeper level in terms of vocabulary, structure, and grammar. Edwin strives to prepare all of his students to become fluent in the future, not just through learning words and vocabulary but also by using phrases and being able to ask and answer questions. He also works hard to ensure that the children of all ages are having fun with Spanish and that they view learning a language as an enjoyable experience. He delights in hearing his students say how much they love Spanish—or better yet saying that he is the best Spanish teacher they have ever had! (Do not worry, Edwin fully realizes he is the only Spanish teacher they

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# The Atom Smashers take Manhattan

By Shek Leung and Ethan Leung

On March 14th (also known as Pi day), team Atom Smashers, sporting their new team t-shirts funded by the ever generous Q300 PTA, attended the First Lego League NYC Championship at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. The team members are Ethan, Joshua, Jackson, Derek, Sama and Tanha and they were coached by the technology teacher Scott. Matt, Betty and numerous other Q300 family members were also on hand to cheer them on. Although

the Atom Smashers was the only Q300 team that advanced to the NYC finals, the team members felt that they represented all of the Q300 teams...XXL Bunnies, Senior Tech, and Minifigures. The Atom Smashers faced some challenges on the obstacle course and the presentation portion of the event but the team members felt that they were able to persevere and keep calm. The Atom Smashers did not advance to the nationals and came in 26 out of 80 teams. The team gained invaluable experience and had lots of fun and wonderful memories.

## FROM TEAM MEMBER ETHAN....

**Now, some may or may not be sad about not winning the competition, just let it be known that this was our first time and we had made it really far. With this known, we'll bring this into mind for next year so we can win, and if next year's team doesn't win (which I highly doubt), at least we had fun and gained experience which we can build on. I think there's a low chance of us losing. So, to leave off with a team quote, Keep Calm... and Smash On.**

Considering that this is the first time competing in the competition for all of the team members, making it to the NYC championship was a feat in itself. They faced off against some highly experienced FLL teams throughout NYC. The team's robot, Chip, did a good job at completing quite a few obstacles thanks to the programmers and builders. FLL's theme this year was Education and all teams participating had to decide on their research project based on this theme. The Q300 FLL teams came up with great ideas such as teaching the elderly about the latest technology, teaching Spanish using powerpoint and teaching people to draw. The Atom Smashers' research project was entitled "Teaching physics through fun animations".

Great job and a job well done to the Atom Smashers. Smash on.... 🍌

## Meet Edwin continued

have ever had . . .)

While most of his schedule is dedicated to Spanish instruction, ESL is also a very important part of Edwin's role at Q300. ESL consists of small group instruction and currently includes only kindergarteners. Edwin spends time in the classrooms working with ESL students and will also occasionally pull students out for individual instruction. Edwin works to incorporate content while he is teaching the language. Edwin is working with students that speak a wide range of languages, reflecting the diversity of the Q300 community.

Edwin also has a reading group with kindergarteners and co-teaches physical education to the kindergarten classes on Mondays. Feel free to

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ask him what steal the bacon actually is! Beyond his teaching duties, Edwin has taken on the additional responsibility of participating in the School Leadership Team (SLT) in the school's inaugural year. This is Edwin's first experience on an SLT and he has found that it has deepened his connection to the school—he enjoys contributing to strategic and tactical management of the school and working with the group to bring Matt's vision for Q300 to life. Edwin appreciates the level of involvement that parents have in the school—in his words Q300 parents form a caring community that is deeply invested and willing to work hard for the school, not just for their individual children.

Edwin grew up on the North shore of Long Island and now lives in Flushing. He is absolutely passionate about sports, both playing and watching them. A self-described “junkie”, he is fanatical about football, tennis, golf, baseball, hockey, soccer, skiing, and snowboarding and his favorite professional teams are the 49ers, Yankees, and Islanders. This has been a big year for Edwin and his family—in addition to joining the Q300 staff, he, his wife Suzanne (who is also a teacher in NYC schools), and their dog Etosha all welcomed their first child, Tiago, in December. Congratulations Edwin! 🎉

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## The Coca-Cola Math Engineering Design Challenge: Thinking Outside the Box

By Qudsia Banu with Umair Almahmood

The Coca-Cola fridge pack is really an almost perfect box for its purpose. How do you improve something like that? The sixth grade students at Q300 were recently asked by their science and Math teacher Betty Eck to do just that. Their job would be to design and make a 3D model of an improved soda box and present their idea. Points would be given, among other things, for uniqueness, functionality, efficiency of stacking, ease of dispensing and cost-effectiveness. Additionally, it would have to hold twelve cans and be made from a single piece of cardboard.

The sixth graders rose magnificently to the challenge. Divided into nine teams they brainstormed, designed, as well as calculated volume, surface area and overall cost. Each team's finished product was then peer-reviewed by other teams to continue the scientific learning process.

On March 13th, the 6th grade families were invited to see the finished presentations: the pitch. Coffee and refreshments were available. Everyone enjoyed the presentations, the good natured heckling of rival teams during Q&A time, and judged each box according to the pre-set criteria. The youngest guest judge to turn up was nine years old! Each team was able to showcase a box that had certain strengths, and were different from the original boxes. The designs were all smart and attractive, including some surprises as plus shaped, stair shaped, triangle and cylindrical ‘boxes.’ Each team tried their best to make the judging panel understand why their box was most appropriate to be the next Coca-Cola ‘it’ box. Some teams, including the winning team by popular vote, ‘The Pinguins’, took it a step further by using attractive audio-visual clips. Others came up with catchy slogans.

The Coca-Cola challenge was an exceptionally well designed learning project, as it combined real world engineering with recently learnt math concepts (volume, surface area) and invited multifaceted problem-solving. Students had to consider cost and aesthetics as well, since their presentations had to be attractive and eye-catching on a budget. They also got some experience on persuasive speaking in front of an audience.

In the end, it just boiled down to good fun. 🎉



# Class Updates



## First Grade:

In Math students and their families concluded our unit on Surveys with a **Math Celebration on March 13th**. Students created their own survey questions, collected data from classmates, and used the data to create graphs. We are currently working on our new measuring unit “Fish Lengths and Animal

Jumps.” We will practice measuring with different units and practice comparing lengths.

In writing we are creating our own series books. Students are investigating **what makes realistic fiction realistic**, and learning to use patterns to help elaborate. We have also looked at realistic fiction writers including Cynthia Rylant who writes *Henry and Mudge*, Barbara Park who writes *Junie B. Jones*, David Adler who writes *Cam Jansen*, and Marjorie Sharmat who writes *Nate the Great* to help students guide their writing.

In art we are exploring sculpture. We have learned about artists including **Alexander Calder and Isamu Noguchi**. Students have been creating their own sculptures using materials including paper, wire, bottle tops, plastic bottles, and wood. We will visit the Noguchi Museum later this month!

The **Kiskeya Sports soccer program began on March 20th** and will continue for 13 weeks. The students are also continuing their music unit through the **Brooklyn Conservatory of Music**. First Grade Soccer and Music programs are both funded by the PTA.

## Kindergarten:

The kindergarteners have been **solving simple addition and subtraction word problems** in math. Students learn to recognize key words which indicate what operation is required to solve a given problems. They are encouraged to represent addition and subtraction with objects, sounds or sounds, and to visualize and draw pictures to help solve the problems. Finally they solved the problems by writing equations. Some examples of this type of assignment were on display on the wall outside the kindergarten classrooms during the parent-teacher conferences.

It's worth noting that while content of in-class math assignments may be a bit of a mystery to kindergarten parents so far, the **children have been making fantastic progress in Math**. Many of the earlier in-class assignments were activity based, which means the teachers aren't able to send copies or results of the assignments home. Examples recent of assignments will soon be on display for parents to see during a class visit to celebrate the children's accomplishments in math. A date has not been set for this event yet, however Jackie and Eileen will soon let us know shortly.

On **April 17th** in the afternoon Jackie and Eileen have scheduled a date for parents to visit the classrooms and celebrate the kindergarteners writing, and to see their past work on display. A note for parents, Matt and the teachers encourage parents who want to visit the

kindergarten class to get in touch with them and schedule a time to visit.

The kindergarteners will be very busy with field trips as the weather gets warmer. On April 30th, the kindergarten classes will go to the **Queens Zoo** to participate in a workshop called “What Animals Eat”. On May 5th, the kindergarteners will be going to the **National Museum of Math** to learn about polygons and symmetry while participating in a workshop called “Shape Shifters”. And on May 18th, they will go to Queens College to see a performance of the show **Curious George**.

On the weekend after the class trip to the Queens Zoo, the PTA K class reps would like to organize an **informal class outing at the Central Park Zoo**. We will keep you informed via e-mail.

Jackie and Eileen are working plans for a **stepping up ceremony** in June, to celebrate the kindergarteners completing their first year of school and moving up to 1st grade. For those who'd like to help with any arrangements either before or on the day of the celebration, please get in touch with PTA K class reps Tom & Atsuko at Tom.Atsuko@GMail.com

## Sixth Grade:

On March 16th the sixth graders had visitors to the school to take a walk through our Humanities classroom and view student work from our current unit, **River Valley Civilizations**. There were five “stops” (or stations) along the way. Students acted as the “tour guides,” providing insight into the work on display, while others were stationed with some of our essential blended learning tools including Google Classroom, iLearn, MyOn, and ePortfolios. The last stop on the tour was a Q&A with Ms. Annette and students to address further inquiries about the curriculum and instructional model. 🗣️

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