



Our Goal: One Combined Building for Q300 K-8

By Marlon Aranda

Photo by Jennifer Choi

The One School Committee was formed more than two years ago and we're thrilled with our progress so far. While the opening of a new school building is not something that will happen in the next year or two, we are enthusiastic about the progress of our awareness campaign, and for the support from THE DOE and our elected officials.

This fall, the committee has been busy raising awareness for Q300's need for a combined school, which would put the elementary and middle schools under one roof. As we all know, being split between two sites has been a challenging problem for our administration, our teachers, and our growing community of students.

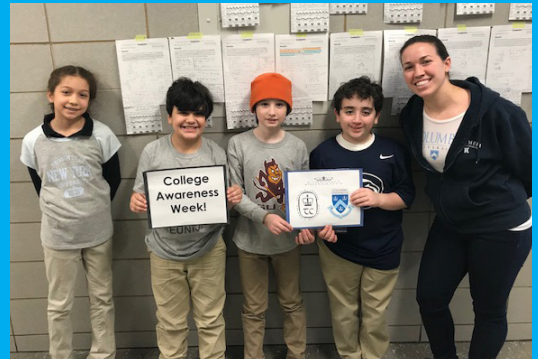
The group has argued that a new school facility would:

- Eliminate duplicated office and administrative functions required for managing our two locations; these operational inefficiencies strain the school's already limited budget,
- Allow teachers more time in the classroom, instead of traveling back and forth between campuses,
- Create a more cohesive culture and school identity between the upper and lower divisions,
- Provide dedicated enrichment rooms to support the school's inquiry-based mission, which may include free-play explorations, robotics, art, music, and maker-type spaces, and
- Provide universal wheelchair access for all students.

In October, our Community Education Council (CEC30) – led by District 30 Superintendent Dr. Phil Composto – unanimously approved Resolution #129, which publicly stated their support for a Q300 K-8

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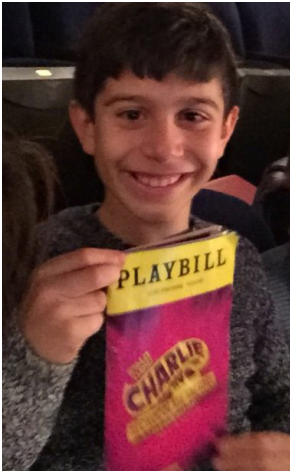
January 11 was College Awareness Day at Q300





Q300 On Winter Break!

THIS PAGE ROW ONE: Anika, Third Grade, at Death Valley National Park; Chenkai, Sixth Grade, skiing with family; Myriam, Fourth Grade, at the NYBG Train Show; **ROW TWO:** Eric, Second Grade, with the giant geode at the AMNH; Clara, Third Grade, at Plattekill Mountain in the Catskills; Nedelya, Kindergarten, baking at Granny's; Mira, First Grade, at the Art Studio in Manhattan; **ROW THREE:** Lenina, Second Grade, with Mom and Grandma; Darius, Fourth Grade, at the New England Aquarium; Dalia and Eva, Fourth Grade, and Ziyad, First Grade, ringing in the New Year. **OPPOSITE PAGE ROW ONE:** Eduardo, Fourth Grade, at a Broadway show; Lilou, Kindergarten, in Quebec; Jason, Second Grade and Avery, Kindergarten, at the NYBG Train Show; Emma Jane, Second Grade, at the pool; **ROW TWO:** James, Fourth Grade, at Pizzeria Uno's on New Years Eve; Celine, Third Grade, at the Leaning Tower of Pisa; Khloe, First Grade, at the World Ice Arena; **ROW THREE:** Nicolas, First Grade, cross-country skiing; Hana, Sixth Grade, and Konatsu, Fourth Grade, performing with the NYC Ballet; Gemma, Third Grade, figure skating; Ethan, Second Grade, at the Franklin Institute in Philly; **ROW FOUR:** Penelope, Second Grade, upstate New York; Emily, First Grade, with her twin brothers Eric and Elliot at the Kalahari Resort; Stephanie, Fourth Grade, skiing.



Meet Ms. Sonita, Third Grade Teacher

By Hillit Zwick

Ms. Sonita Ramkinshun is a real New Yorker. Born and raised in Queens, her favorite part of New York City is that she always feels like a tourist. "I love the city, I love Broadway, I love the Rockettes, and I always go to see the Christmas Tree at Rockefeller Center." After graduating high school, Ms. Sonita studied to become a nurse, but quickly realized that she wanted to devote her time to working with children. When she was younger, she loved working with children through her church and youth group involvement. She decided to make a career switch, and studied for her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education at Queens College. After becoming a teacher, Ms. Sonita taught kindergarten at a charter school for 3.5 years then moved on to a public school setting working with grades kindergarten through fifth. Through her passion for curriculum and teaching, she was encouraged into a leadership track. She went back to school to receive her school building license and school district license, which puts her on a path to become a school principal one day!

Ms. Sonita's favorite part of working at Q300 is the school community and welcoming school culture. She is especially thrilled about the diverse and intelligent student body, as well as the support she receives from the parents. "When you have that extra help at home, and you know parents are reviewing their scholar's work, it makes a big difference in teaching." Ms. Sonita's favorite subjects are math and science. In math, she loves learning formulas, and knowing that there is always a right answer. She is looking forward to teaching her 3rd graders fractions, and enhancing their understanding of multiplication.



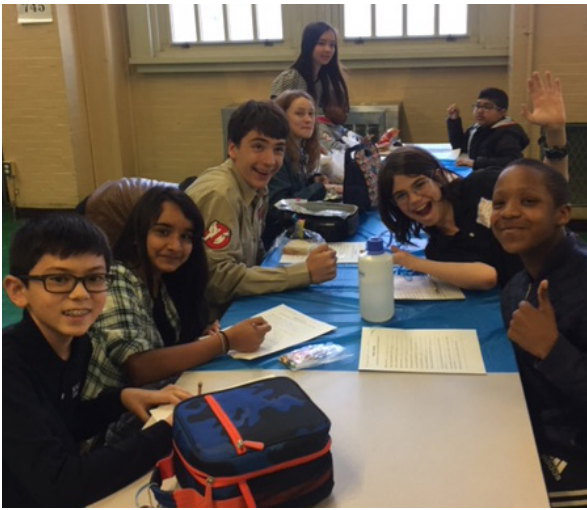
Ms. Sonita fell in love with science when she studied nursing, microbiology, and physiology. And this year, she is excited about bringing engineering into the school, so that the students get a real-world, hands-on experience with some of the concepts they have learned.

In her free time, Ms. Sonita enjoys exercising and working out. It keeps her feeling healthy and happy! Her new year's resolution for 2018? To give her students the tools to succeed this year and beyond! ☺

Science Celebration in Class 301

Photos by Dan Bach





Making New Friends at Mix-it-Up-Day

By Christine Katartzis, Middle School Guidance Counselor

On Tuesday, October 31st, students at both the elementary and middle school campuses of Q300 participated in the official “Mix-it-Up at Lunch Day,” an international campaign that encourages students to identify, question and cross social boundaries. Leading to “Mix-it-Up Day,” flyers were posted in the hallways of Q300 to spark student interest.

On the day of the event, tables in the cafeteria were decorated with tableclothes of different colors. Students entering the lunchroom were given a colored ribbon that coincided with one of the tablecloth covers. Student council members and other student volunteers helped direct students to sit at the tables that corresponded with the color of their ribbons. Student interview questionnaires were distributed to all students entering the lunchroom. Each student had to interview someone they didn’t know who was sitting at their table. Some of the questions on the questionnaire were, “What languages do you speak?” “What was your favorite thing you did this summer?” “What was your favorite book?” “If you were stuck on an island with one celebrity, who would you choose to be stuck with?” “Where would you live, if you could live anywhere in the world?”

At first, students were hesitant in sitting apart from their friends and classmates, however they quickly acclimated and became engaged in the activity at hand. It was great to watch students move out of their comfort zones and connect with someone new over lunch. Numerous pictures were taken to capture the excitement of the day. ●

Students wrote reflective essays during advisory following “Mix-it-Up Day.” Here are some excerpts:

“It was an innovative idea, and can only impact in a positive way.”

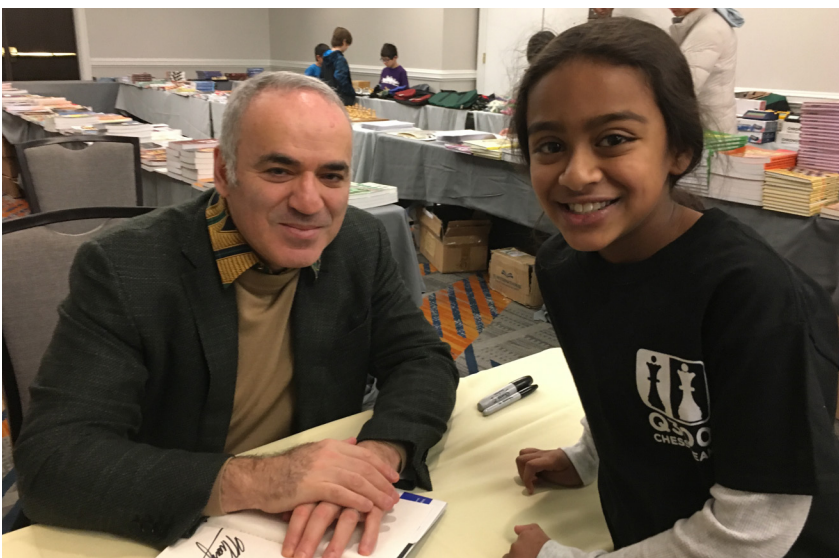
“I got to meet someone new. We had a bit of something in common. Never would have thought to talk to him.”

“I learned something more about someone who I met before but knew nothing about.”

“I am a shy girl, but mix it up day let me open up to new people.”

“I think that mix-it-up day was beneficial for the students because they got to talk to people from different grades. Normally, we are separated into grades and sit with only our friends. This was a chance to meet new people from Q300.”

“In my opinion, I think mix-it-up day went very well. I met a new person, someone I probably wouldn’t have talked to on my own time. I found out that she was the owner of a dog I have been petting since the first week of school.”



Q300 Chess Team News

By Carol Varikos

Photos by Viktor Yim, Luke Lukose, and JoAnn Chapman

The Q300 chess team participated in The 52nd Greater NY Scholastic Chess Championships on January 6 and 7 at the Brooklyn Marriott. This is US Chess' longest-running scholastic since 1966 and is sponsored by the Kasparov Foundation. Joyce Lukose, 4th grader, participated in the tournament on Saturday and was fortunate to meet Garry Kasparov, one of the grandmasters of all time and former world champion! Representing Q300 at the tournament on Sunday were first graders Zachery Yim, Wailea Schroffner and Zoe Marketan, and second graders Yuri Cortazar and Eric Winsan. Zoe finished 13th in the K-1 Under 400

group and received a trophy! Q300 as a team finished 17th out of 33 in their first City Championship!

We are very proud of all of our chess team students who have participated in tournaments throughout the year. Additional accomplishments include the Anderson Chess Tournament on December 17. Eighth grader Anthony Wright placed 5th in 31 for a trophy! First graders Zachery and Wailea made top 10 for trophies! It has been a wonderful experience and learning opportunity for all. The team will be headed to Nashville in May for the Nationals! We encourage all students and parents interested in Q300 chess to reach out

to Eileen (wong.eil@gmail.com) and Mark (markschroffner@yahoo.com). It would be great to have more students join the chess team!

Special shout outs to our chess team founders, Eileen Yim and Mark Schroffner, for their dedication and organizing efforts; to Ivan Cortazar for designing the snazzy team t-shirts; to NYChess Kids, particularly Saudin Robovic for supporting the team with his time and providing space for practice; to Nitai for prepping the team for the tournament and his words of encouragement; to all of our parents and students for their commitment; and to Principal Bill for supporting chess at Q300! 🙌

Letter from the PTA Co-Presidents

Dear Fellow Q300 Families:

Hello and Happy New Year! We hope you all had a wonderful holiday break.

We are halfway through the school year and have accomplished so much. We look forward to all that is in store for the remainder of the school year. Here are some updates since our last newsletter:

Volunteering to build our school community

We have had active participation at PTA events including the October Costume Party, November Gallery night, December Movie Night, January International Potluck. We have worked to support Q300 staff and students at Picture Day, Parent-teacher Conferences, the Middle School Open House, and tournaments for both Chess Kids and the Debate Club (where our Q300 kids excelled).

Showing our appreciation

We have demonstrated our gratitude to the Q300 staff by hosting a Teacher Thanksgiving Luncheon and a Holiday Breakfast. Additionally, many parents contributed to an holiday collection for the staff. We have featured and honored our unique programs, policies, and wonderful teachers in our quarterly newsletter.

Fundraising to invest in our school

We have fundraised through many of the events above as well as through bake sales, purchasing Thanksgiving pies, eating Pizzeria Uno pizzas, attending film-raisers, buying gift cards, shopping via Amazon Smile, and direct appeal donations. The PTA has now raised \$155,000 of our \$222,000 goal.

Supporting our local community

We have supported our extended communities via sock and coat drives and contributing to the District 30 Hurricane Relief drive.

Advocating for Q300 resources

We have advocated in locating technology, Spanish, and arts resources for our students and Vassar College interns for our school. We also have had ongoing advocacy by our One School Committee by moving forward the city-wide conversation to find a one school solution for Q300. We have also been active in securing Reso A and discretionary funds from our local elected officials, resulting in technology upgrades, new science and art labs, and a renovated schoolyard at IS 126.

Whew!! That's pretty amazing. Thanks to all the volunteers — you rock!

Ways you can get involved over the next few weeks:

1. Help to plan for our Spring Auction in May
2. Contribute to the newsletter—interview a teacher, share pictures of events, make suggestions
3. Serve on one of our committees (such membership, enrichment, one school, and grant committee)
4. Help out behind the scenes with your web skills, editing skills, story writing skills
5. And of course we are always happy to receive your ideas, talents, and resources!

Maria Hantzopoulos & Margarita Soto
Co-Presidents, Q300 PTA

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school building. This was an essential first step towards a new building.

With the resolution in hand, our committee members began attending various public meetings to build more support for a new school. So far, we've presented to:

- **The Panel for Educational Policy (PEP).** Led by Chancellor Farina, the PEP addresses citywide educational policy issues.
- **District 30's District Planning team.** DOE administrative group that assesses how well schools are utilized.
- **School Construction Authority (SCA).** The City agency that finds new sites and builds the schools.

In addition, the PTA's Co-Vice Presidents for Community Affairs – Lynn Kennedy and Celso Garcia – have been making the rounds with our local elected officials, including NYC

Council Members Costa Constantinides (District 22) and Jimmy Van Bramer (District 26), NYS Assembly Members, and the Queens Borough President Melinda Katz.

The committee is continually evaluating potential building sites. So far, we have requested the SCA to study building a new school adjacent to PS 151 (Woodside/Astoria border) and the vacated Sports Authority site on Northern Boulevard/Broadway. Ideally, a new Q300 school building will continue to serve our citywide community, with convenient access to subway and bus routes. If you have an idea for a site that could work for Q300, please email MarlonA@Q300pta.org.

And most importantly, many thanks to all of the members of the One School Committee, who have been helping hone our message, gathering data, and attending the public meetings.

Stay tuned for more opportunities to make your voice heard and help us toward our goal of moving into one Q300 campus! 🎉



Q300's New Debate Team Starts Strong

By Erin Black

The Q300 Debate Team was formed this year as part of the Chess Kids after school program. Under the leadership of Mr. Cho, these Middle Schoolers have learned the structure of Parliamentary Debate and been able to practice their skills every Wednesday afternoon. They have recently begun competing in city wide tournaments sponsored by the New York City Urban Debate League and have been making Q300 very proud! At the most recent meet, members of the Q300 team were awarded both the number one individual speaker award in the novice division as well as the number one team award in the open division. Several other members of the team also earned individual speaker and team awards and Q300 came in 5th place overall at the tournament! Way to go, Mr. Cho and the debate team! 🏆

Middle School Student Council

President Upama Hasan (Class 801)
 Vice President Charles Falivena (801)
 Secretary Julia Marshall (801)
 Treasurer Chase Duncan (703)

Council members:

Michael Leong (602)
 Amrisha Roy (602)
 Evan Chen (701)
 Robel Mehreteab (702)
 Bailey Williams (702)
 Roman Kuznetsov (703)
 Rukayat Chowdhury (801)
 Ella Kwok (802)

Upcoming News & Events

2/16–2/23 Lunar New Year and Midwinter Break. School is closed.

2/23–3/18 New York International Children's Film Festival, showcasing the best new films for children ages 3-18. Q300 earns \$3 back for every ticket you purchase! Go to <http://nyicff.org/tickets/> and select our school from the "Select My School" menu on the top of the page.

2/26–3/5 Tea Days. Every purchase made through the TeaSchoolDays.com website (not their regular website!) will save you 15% off your purchase. Q300 will also receive 15% of your purchase as a donation from the company.

3/9 Annual Zumbathon 5:30 pm at the PS 17 campus. **Save the date** and get ready to move at our second annual Zumbathon! And don't worry — you can participate by raising money if you don't like to dance!

3/15 Parent-Teacher Conferences for both Elementary and Middle Schools.

3/30–4/6 Spring Break. School is closed.

5/6 Save the date for our **Stepping into Summer Dance Party and Auction** 3-6 pm at the Chian Federation in Astoria (to be confirmed). Consider donating prizes for auction, helping to get sponsors for the Auction Journal, or joining the committee. Email auction@q300pta.org for more information.

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Newsletter Editor: Amanda Spielman



We welcome your contributions, if you have article ideas or photos for the next newsletter contact Amanda Spielman at communications@q300pta.org.