



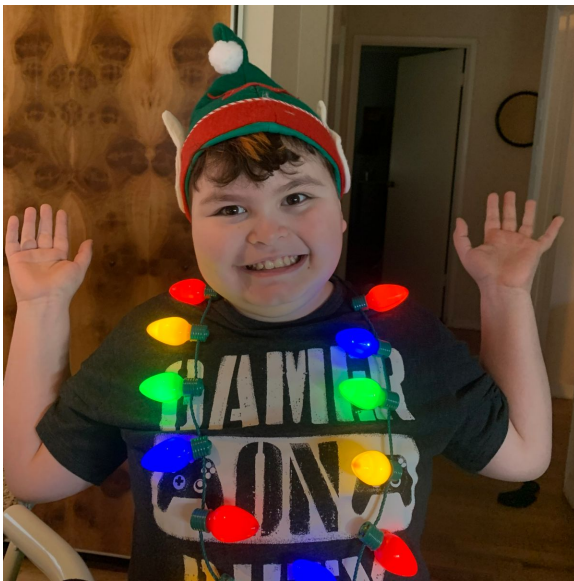
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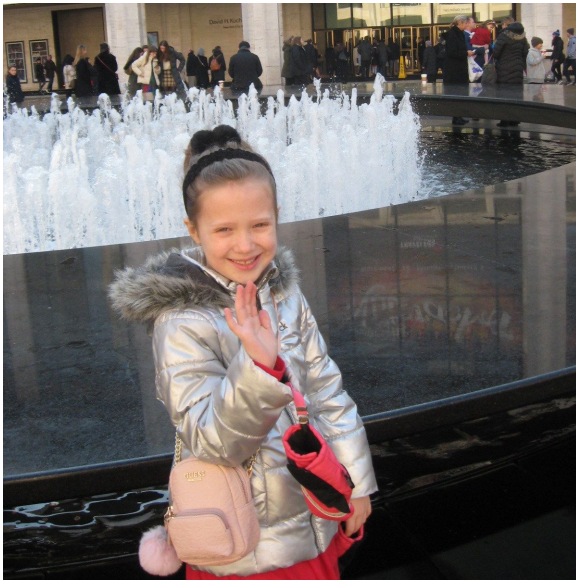
30th Avenue School – Inclusion. Inquiry. Responsibility.

Q300 PTA WINTER 2020 ISSUE

It's still early on in 2020, but there is a lot happening at Q300! Read our Winter issue to see what some students were up to over winter break, learn about the search process for our new Principal, and get up to speed on more NASA-related excitement. Student Celine Bach tells us about a fun classroom activity, and you can learn more about fantastic teachers Ali Lisberger and Anna Hauser (along with their new little ones)! Learn how your employer can donate money to our school, find out about the 7th grade's Teaching Fellow, and meet another fantastic Q300 family. Read an update about the School Wellness Council and learn more about the story behind that wonderful live PTA meeting Facebook feed. Have a great mid-winter break, everyone!

Winter Break Fun!





Joshua (401) visiting California and Las Vegas; Penelope (401) and Amalia (201) in Cape May, NJ; Kate (202) at Lincoln Center; Scarlett (K1) and her brother in Canada





Penny (502), Dean (301), Hunter (502) and Bryce (301) at Mont Trembland, Canada; Nedelya (201) at Journey's End Farm Camp; Celine (501) in Zagreb; Stephanie (602) at the Hello Panda Lantern Festival at Citifield; Nicolas (301) with mom, Lynn, in Dyker Heights.



Dalia (602) and Ziyad (301) in El Yunque Rain Forest, Puerto Rico; James (601) sports a new haircut; Artemis (402) and Maeve (402) enjoy all you can eat sushi; Axel (603) performed in NYC Ballet's The Nutcracker;

Understanding the Principal Search Process

By Daniel Bach and David Wang

With the retirement of Principal Bill Biniaris earlier this year, Q300 is seeking a new principal. The selection process is governed by NY State law and the Chancellor's Regulation C-30 (Reg. C-30). The following are selected highlights about the process.

Who decides?

District 30 Community Superintendent Dr. Philip Composto decides who becomes the next permanent Q300 principal, with community consultation.

Who is eligible to apply?

Principal candidates must "demonstrate their capacity to lead the school," plus they must meet educational, managerial, administrative and pedagogical qualifications, including having certain administrative licenses. Furthermore, they must have instructional leadership skills, be able to establish a positive learning environment, be able to "align resources to support school goals and student needs, support and evaluate teachers" and "engage teacher teams in collaborative practices." Candidates must have at least 7 years of prior full-time experience in a pedagogic position (e.g., classroom teacher, dean, instructional coach, assistant principal, etc.). Prior to applying for the principal position, the candidate must have successfully gone through a selective screening process to become a member of the Principal Candidates Pool.

How Does a Candidate Apply?

Candidates apply through the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE). The vacancy was posted on February 3, 2020 and will remain open until February 18, 2020. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/careers/principals-and-assistant-principals/openings-for-principals>.

What is the Appointment Process?

From the list of those who apply, Dr. Composto will identify 3-5 candidates for interview by the Level I Committee. The Committee will include District 30 Community Deputy Superintendent Dr. William Fahey, a principal from a nearby school, two Q300 teachers, one Q300 support staff, and four to seven parents. Parents are selected first from parent members of the School Leadership Team ("SLT"), then from PTA officers. If they are not available, the PTA will select Q300 parents to serve on the Committee.

At least 7 calendar days prior to the candidate interviews, the SLT will seek input on any selection criteria the PTA believes to be important for the position. The Committee will discuss the PTA selection criteria and decide whether or not to include them. Separately, the Committee may reach out to the Q300 community for input on the questions that will be asked at the candidate interviews.

The Committee will meet to interview the candidates identified by Dr. Composto and send its candidate evaluations to Dr. Composto. Dr. Composto will review the evaluations and conduct his own review, which may include interviewing the candidates. Prior to announcing the appointment, Dr. Composto must consult with the SLT. The SLT has the opportunity to provide feedback to Dr. Composto and NYC DOE Chancellor Richard Carranza. Ultimately, Dr. Composto makes the final decision concerning the appointment of the principal.

Spacemen

By Wennie Chen and Lynn Kennedy



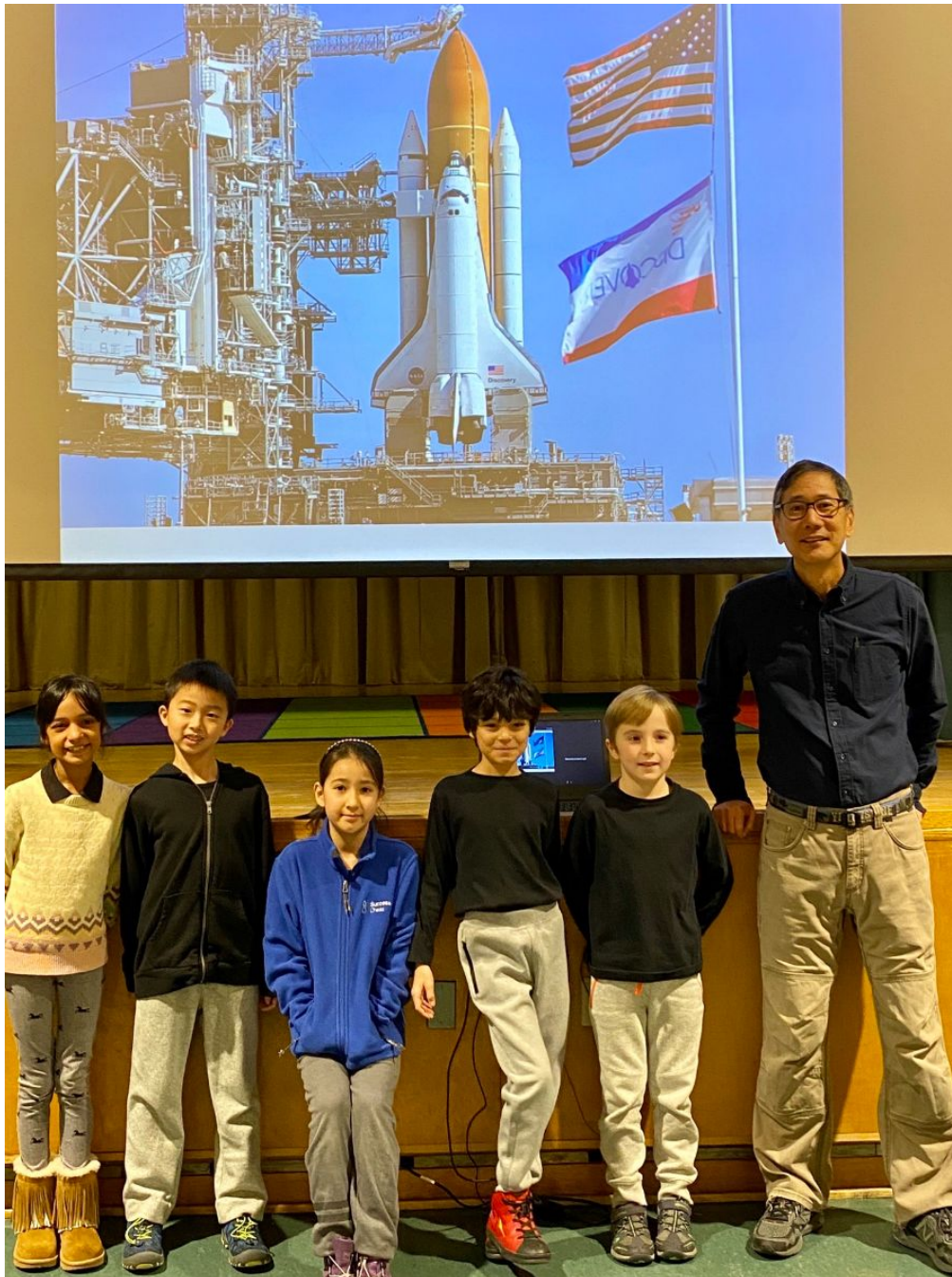
*January was an amazing month for Q300 as we were fortunate to have not one but two guest speakers with phenomenal scientific and rich life experience to share with our children. Photojournalist/Amateur Astronomy Association Member **Stan Honda**, along with Former NASA Astronaut/Columbia University Engineering Professor **Mike Massimino**, presented on their lifelong work and journeys into their professions. Their stories exemplified a true passion for what they pursue and their devotion in art and science certainly has inspired many.*

The Night Magic

On January 6, 2020, Stan Honda presented at the Lower Division. A well-regarded photojournalist, Stan is best known for his compelling photography documenting the 9/11 event. He has worked for over 34 years in Agence France-Presse (AFP), the French news agency. As a photojournalist, Stan covered a wide range of topics including news events, politics, economics, sports and human interest stories. He also photographed the space shuttle program for five years, which was a highlight of his time at AFP since he has been following the space program from childhood. In recent years, Stan has turned his passion into astrophotography, pursuing imagery of the night skies. His works have been featured in NASA publications numerous times. Stan has also worked as an artist-in-residence at six national parks with the aim of helping preserve our view of the night sky.

At his presentation at Q300, Stan shared a range of photography with our students from his NYC night skies of moon and planets, solar eclipses, star time-lapse, aurora, and his memorable work capturing the

NASA space shuttle era. His anecdotes of camping in the wild, staying up in the wee hours in the dark, waiting in the swamp at Cape Canaveral combating mosquitoes and heat, and in arctic Norway in extreme cold for the shots he envisioned, won many “Ah”s, “Wow”s, and laughter from the audience.



Stan Honda with students in front of his photograph of the space shuttle Discovery.

Stan exuded a seemingly endless and calm patience with the multiple and creative questions he received following the presentation. The presentation was well received by all. Aside from work, Stan also volunteers as a board member of the Amateur Astronomers Association of New York (AAA). He coordinates AAA Astrophotography group throughout New York City and manages the photography of special celestial events.

For information on free stargazing events in NYC, go to <https://www.aaa.org/observing/>. For information about Stan and his work, please go to <http://www.stanhonda.com>.

Reach for the Stars

Former astronaut Mike Massimino presented at Q300's Upper Division on January 13, 2020. Mike is currently a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Columbia University, and is the Senior Advisor of the Space Program at the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. He was notably introduced as the first human to ever tweet from space in 2009.

Mike served as an astronaut from 1996 to 2014. His two space flight missions: STS-109 in 2002 and STS-125 in 2009, were the final two Hubble Space Telescope servicing missions. Mike was the last person to work inside of Hubble. His team set a team record for the most cumulative spacewalking time in one single space shuttle mission. For the personal record, Mike has logged a total of 571 hours and 47 minutes in space and 30 hours and 4 minutes of spacewalking!



Astronaut training in the buoyancy pool at Johnson Space Center, Houston.

In addition to his contributions in research and Hubble servicing, Mike also held two patents, numerous awards, as well as regular appearances on the media, popular TV shows, and public events. He is also the author of many engineering research papers and the New York Times Bestseller *Spaceman: An Astronaut's Unlikely Journey to Unlock the Secrets of the Universe*. To honor him, local officials renamed the street where Mike grew up on in Franklin Square, NY "Mike Massimino Street."

During Mike's 1.5 hour presentation, our children applauded his gift for storytelling as he shared his path into engineering and aerospace, a childhood dream, that he himself was not even sure he could accomplish with his many life obstacles. Having tried for 8 years, his never-give-up attitude eventually won him an acceptance letter from NASA (also won a great cheer from the audience!) "Education is very important," he repeated. "You need it to achieve whatever you wish in life. You never know."



“One happy astronaut after a successful Hubble servicing mission,” stated Mike.

Mike later shared his experience about his training becoming an astronaut, his tasks in space, spacewalks for Hubble servicing, and the well-known emergency repair on Hubble (by breaking off a handle!) Students were amazed at his narratives and were especially excited about his childhood toy Astronaut Snoopy coming on board with him to the space station. Inspired by the Apollo 11 moon landing, Astronaut Snoopy has accompanied Mike along the way. Another highlight was when Mike showed a clip of astronauts making burritos under microgravity. It sparked some discussions later on astronauts bathroom challenges. Q300 students were engaged and intrigued by how things work in space.

Mike’s presentation centered on the teaching of hard work and perseverance, and underscored the important role and impact females play in the STEM field. Questions from our children ranged from “Where is Snoopy now?”, “Why do we see the moon during the day?” to inquiry about gravity and space travel. We were thrilled to have Mike over and hope that with this experience our children are encouraged to dream big and carry on the spirit of exploration to this amazing world we live in.

For more info on Mike Massimino, go to <https://www.mikemassimino.com/#more>.

Making College Pennants

By Celine Bach (5th grade student)

On January 10, 2020, the 5th grade made College Pennants. I was in 501. The reason it was one of my most favorite activities of the semester is because we got to research our dream colleges, and make pennants based on them.

The two colleges I researched were MIT and Caltech because I was thinking of being a math researcher or a solutions architect. I decided to make a pennant of MIT. My pennant was an old logo, which meant it was cardinal and white colored, and it had the official MIT seal on it that I drew.

My classmates made a variety of different college pennants, and each one was unique. A lot of people wanted to go to prestigious schools such as Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, and they all looked amazing.

It was also amazing because even if you have already completed your own, you could see another person completing theirs, and since we had so many colors, shades, and different colleges, it was a mesmerizing experience.

Overall, I think that everyone liked the college pennant making. I mean, or else why would we have voted to work on them for an extra period, am I right? Fun fact: 501 and 502 made different shaped pennants. 501 made pennant flags, and 502 made real pennants. It was really fun, even without the real pennants!

Meet our Teacher: Ali Lisberger

Interview by Neerja Vasishta



Can you tell us a little about your teaching background? What are you teaching this year at Q300 and how long have you taught here?

I went to St. Joseph's College on Long Island and received a B.A. in Child Study. I have a New York State teaching certification in five areas: Early Childhood (birth-second grade), Childhood (first-sixth grade), Early Childhood: Students with Disabilities (birth-second grade) and Childhood: Students with Disabilities (first-sixth grade) and Educational Technology. My first teaching job was at Brentwood UFSD as a permanent substitute in a pre-K setting. I was on the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and tested students to see if they were eligible for special education services. Then I got a full year leave replacement teaching 5th grade to students in a 12:1 setting. At this time I also went back to school for my Master's degree in Educational Technology at Long Island University.

I left Brentwood and took a job for the NYCDOE in 2009. I worked at PS1 in the Bronx for five years as a special education teacher. During that time I received my first tenure and taught many different grades in different settings such as 12:1 and ICT.

I came to Q300 in 2015. I wanted to pursue a teaching career in Technology and switched over from my special education license to general ed. Last year, I received my second tenure. I LOVE teaching technology and computer science at Q300 -- it's so much fun!

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

I live in Astoria with my husband, Dennis and our baby girl, Nora. Dennis and I have been together for 16 years -- married for 9 this May. We went to the same high school but didn't start dating until college (we both went to local schools). We are so in love with Nora and thoroughly enjoying this new chapter in our lives -- minus the limited sleep part.

I enjoy bike riding, traveling, hiking, hosting dinners and parties, doing puzzles, reading and creating videos using iMovie.

What are your hopes for your students as a whole?

My goal is to empower students to use technology responsibly to learn, create, and participate as competent, kind, responsible digital citizens. By the time they leave me to move on to middle school, I want them to:

- make smart choices online and in life
- use technology in a way that feels healthy and in balance with other life activities (family, friends, school, hobbies, etc.).
- know when to unplug and the importance of face-to-face interactions
- use digital tools effectively as a way to express themselves and do good things for the world
- Know how to apply computational thinking to solve complex problems.
- Demonstrate responsibility and persistence
- Understand the benefits of technology but think critically about the potential dilemmas and challenges
- Build a positive digital footprint that will follow them to high school and beyond
- I could go on and on but those are just a few of my goals!

What's a little known fact about you?

I am an ordained minister who has performed 7 wedding ceremonies. It started a few years back when a good friend of mine asked me to perform the ceremony. Since then I've married another good friend, two sisters, and acquaintances through word of mouth. It's a lot of fun and I enjoy doing it. I believe strongly in the sanction of marriage and love being a part of that special occasion. It's also gotten me over my fear of public speaking which is an added bonus.

Is there anything else you'd like the Q300 community to know about you?

When I first came to Q300 I was so excited to be a part of this very special community. Through all the ups and downs of our school's short history, I'm so happy to be here and excited to see where we're headed.

Meet our Teacher: Anna Hauser

Interview by Neerja Vasishta



Can you tell us a little about your teaching background? What are you teaching this year at Q300 and how long have you taught here?

I started teaching in 2007 as a New York City Teaching Fellow after graduating from Stony Brook University with my degree in Psychology & Sociology. As a Teaching Fellow, I taught math in the Bronx while getting my masters degree at Pace University. In 2012 I got my second masters degree and School Building Leader certificate from Bank Street College. I joined Q300 in its second year as the Upper Division math teacher and got my Gifted & Talented certification from Hunter College. While at Q300 I have taught 6th grade, 7th grade and 8th grade Algebra 1 and I am proud to say that I have taught math to every Q300 graduating class so far. This year in addition to teaching 7th grade and 8th grade Algebra 1, I am also an 8th grade homeroom teacher, 6th - 8th grade advisor, and the facilitator of the Memory Makers elective, which publishes the Upper Division yearbook.

How would you (or others) describe your teaching philosophy and style?

I want any student who enters my classroom to feel like they belong, whether it is in math, advisory or elective. I try to create an environment where students are not afraid to ask questions and take risks. I am very lucky to have a job doing something I really do love and I hope that that authenticity and joy

comes across to my students. I want my students to see the connections between math and the world they live in.

Is there a specific topic or unit that you passionate about teaching? Why?

Ask my students, and I probably have said at one point or another that every topic we are learning about is my favorite, but I really do enjoy teaching Algebra 1. Two of my favorite topics to investigate with students are quadratic functions and systems of equations because they build on so many prior topics, like functions and linear equations.

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

I hope that my students enjoy coming to class and doing math together, but even more than that I hope they take with them some really great memories of our time together, and that they continue to learn, grow, ask questions, and laugh. Every year, I end my letter to my 8th graders with words from a famous fictional TV teacher, "Believe in yourselves. Dream.Try. Do good."

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

I've been lucky to have some really great teachers throughout my entire life. Mrs. DeMaio was my 7th and 8th grade math teacher, and even though she and I didn't know it at the time, she started me on my journey to take higher level math classes. I also had some great teachers in high school who listened to me, encouraged me, and helped me grow.

How did you decide to become a teacher?

Growing up, if you had told me that one day I would be teaching math, I would not have believed you. I was a good student overall, but math was always a subject that challenged me and did not come easy to me. Looking back, it was probably because I had to work so hard in math, that it stood out to me. My dad always loves to reminds me of this one time, in college, when I called him in tears because I had a math test coming up and I was stressed out about it. Every time I thought I was taking my last math class ever, I somehow found myself taking another, and here I am more than twenty years after I first took Algebra 1 as an 8th grader, teaching it my own students, and I cannot imagine teaching anything else.

What Q300 policy or approach resonates with you the most?

When I first heard about Q300 and met with Matt, the founding principal, what resonated with me was that this was more than a school. Matt's vision of creating a community where students "explore who they are and who they want to be, and engage in the active process of making knowledge and better understanding the world around them in ways that drive a sense of responsibility and action" was evident even though Q300 was only in its first year. I wanted to be a part of this school community and the work that was happening here. I have grown so much as a teacher since coming to Q300 and am grateful to have been able to help shape the school and see it grow for the past five years.

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 am born and raised in Astoria, Queens, and Q300 has been my home for many big events in my life including getting married in 2017, and having my daughter just this past October. It has been so wonderful to share these milestones with my students and the school community. My students & their families have been so supportive with me during this time. I had been out for twelve weeks with my daughter, and just got back recently; it has been so great being back. Since sharing the news that I was pregnant with my former students last year and current students this year, I feel so lucky that my daughter has so many people who care about her.

What's a little known fact about you?

I learned how to swim only two years ago, and since then every summer I love to go swimming and can't wait to bring my daughter to the pool this summer.

Anything else you'd like the Q300 community know about you?

I am so lucky to be a part of this school community. Since coming to Q300, I have learned & grown so much as a teacher leader. I have had the privilege of teaching some wonderful students during my time here and I am grateful to work with such amazing educators who inspire me to be a better teacher everyday.

Show Me the (Corporate) Money!

By Claire Lui, Fundraising Co-Chair

How can your employer can donate \$\$\$ to Q300? I'll show you how in 3 easy steps!

As most of you know, the Q300 PTA raises a substantial amount each year to pay for music and art classes, teacher assistants, as well as computers and more. We raise this money through several different avenues: Direct Appeal, fundraising events such as Thanksgiving Pies, and shopping kickbacks with local restaurants or affiliate links to Amazon and other companies. This money generally comes from the families of Q300 students.

The school (not the PTA) also can receive money through different avenues including partnerships with businesses, including Land's End and Stop and Shop, applying for grants, and different funds requested through local elected officials, participatory budgeting, and other government avenues.

However, we, the PTA, also receive a decent amount of money through corporate donations. You, my dear gentle reader, may be sitting on thousands of unused dollars that can be applied to Q300 fundraising and you don't even know it! And the best part is that it's free(ish)!

How does it work?

Many large companies offer different types of donations to non-profits supported by their employees. The three main ways that corporations do so are:

Corporate Match: For every \$1 that you donate, your employer will match your donation with \$1 (and sometimes with \$2 or \$3). There is generally an annual cap (often \$5,000), but corporate match can turn your \$1,500 Direct Appeal Donation into \$3,000! Some companies, such as Google, will even match the amount of money you raise through a fundraiser, such as our Read-A-Thon.

Volunteer Match: If you volunteer a certain amount of hours at Q300, many employers will make a donation to the non-profit (we are a 501c3) to "pay" for your hours. For example, TimeWarner will donate \$500 after an employee volunteers for 30 hours in a year (\$17/hour). Aetna employees receive \$300 after volunteering for 20 hours. Microsoft has no minimum and will donate \$25/hour.

Did you volunteer at Park Day? Did you help sell Thanksgiving Pies? Are you a lunch volunteer? Tally up and log in your hours and Q300 and/or the Q300 PTA can be paid for your donated time!

Corporate Grants: Companies also may have philanthropic arms that offer specific grants to different non-profits. These grants can range from funding Donor's Choose fundraisers or extending a grant to a school to build a garden. The PTA and Q300 administration have worked with different parents to apply for grants from their employers. We encourage you to reach out so that we can help provide the support needed to apply for these funds.

Companies that participate in these programs include most banks, technology companies, airlines, and other large companies. Examples include American Express, Pfizer, Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, Credit Suisse, Google, Bloomberg, Gap, Delta, Disney, Starbucks, Microsoft, Apple, State Farm, ConEd, and Home Depot.

If you work for a corporation, check with your Human Resources Department to see whether your employer participates in a match or grant program and please make sure you register your donations—including any Direct Appeal or Read-a-Thon donations—as well any of your volunteer hours with your company's coordinator so that Q300 receives the full match possible.

Thank you to all the families of Q300 for their work for our school community!

Meet Natalia Santos: Vassar College Education Fellow at Q300

By Maria Hantzopoulos



At some point in your child's time at Q300, you may have heard the talk about a "student teacher" in their classroom during the month of January. While they are not quite student teachers, your child is likely right! Since 2014, Q300 has annually participated in Vassar College Urban Education Fellowship Program during the month of January. There have been Vassar College fellows in various grades over the years, including in first, second, fourth, sixth, and seventh. Since I coordinate this program for Vassar, I have been able to work with the school administration to add Q300 as a participating school.

Vassar College students selected for this program are assigned to partner schools, like Q300, where they spend weekdays working in classrooms with mentor teachers. The fellows, who would normally be on "winter break" between semesters, instead choose to spend the majority of their time assisting an experienced classroom teacher to learn and witness firsthand about the nuts and bolts of teaching! Q300 teachers also love having the extra eyes and hands in the classroom, especially ones that are thinking deeply and rigorously about education and children.

This year, Vassar Senior (and Queens native), Natalia Santos, participated in the program at Q300. Natalia is a biology major but is also pursuing a NY state teaching credential alongside her major in secondary biology education. She was placed with middle school science teacher Esteban Villafuerte. He said he wanted an intern because he believes it's a valuable experience for aspiring teachers to observe classrooms in action.

Upon receiving the placement, both Natalia and Esteban realized they already knew each other! Esteban Villafuerte happened to be Natalia's 7th grade science teacher (he taught in Corona prior to coming to Q300). Amazing turn of events!

I decided to interview Natalia about the program to let the Q300 community know a little bit more about her and the program in general.

Tell us a little about yourself and why you might want to be a teacher.

My name is Natalia Santos. I was born in Colombia, but I grew up in Queens. I've always loved biology and helping others. I wanted to find a career that encompasses these two components. Teachers play a big role in influencing the amount of love students have toward a subject. They're part of the learning experience. Many of my friends have had bad experiences with their science teachers in high school, causing them to hate the sciences and avoid them later in life. However, I want to be a teacher that motivates students to love science even if they decide not to pursue a career in it.

What has been the best part part(s) of doing this internship at Q300?

I think the best part of doing this internship has been walking around the classroom and helping students with small-group discussions and whatever they need. For the first week, I mainly stuck to observing the classroom as I was unsure if I was allowed to assist the kids. However, as I started to feel more comfortable, I started to help them if they seemed stuck with the discussion question. They're all really bright kids and it was very rewarding when I would be able to help them understand some part of science.

I also loved observing how inclusive Q300 is trying to be. Some teachers offer students guide sheets to follow along in class and they try to have everyone participate in some way. The fact that the school also had a workshop with the ADL (Anti-Defamation League), informing the students of the -isms and how they can make their school members more loving and accepting, is a big deal. The school appears to be aiming to have everyone accept everyone for their differences. I think it's great that this sort of workshop is starting in Middle School. I didn't learn about terms such as "non-binary" until high school. However, it's never too early to be aware of the diverse world around us and how we can be accepting.

What is the main thing that you have learned?

I have learned the value of hands-on learning and experimentation. I have always valued hands-on learning throughout my education, however, witnessing the reactions provided a different perspective as a future educator. When Esteban performed experiments or simulations and called for volunteers, all the kids were excited. They're excited to participate and they're amazed by what's going on. One of my goals as a future teacher is to make students passionate about the sciences, and I think seeing the kids' reactions to some of Esteban's approaches has really taught me a lot.

What has been the biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge was seeing how loud the kids could be. That's not to say that only kids can be loud; however, I think it can sometimes be difficult for teachers to get the class to settle down. I think Q300 approaches this in a unique way that I believe is useful. Rather than just expecting the kids to be quiet right away, a countdown is used. This gives the students enough time to finish what they were saying and also to focus their attention back on the teacher. I've also been told that sometimes there are good days and bad days in teaching. However, it's still rewarding.

Wrapping up, what is your key take-away?

My key take-away is that adolescents are very bright and should have their voices heard. They have so much capability and it's up to teachers to make that ability known. Lecture-style teaching often does not let these voices be heard, but having moments of discussion and experimentation really allows the kids to get excited to learn and to think deeper. I feel that this experience greater solidifies my goal of being a teacher in the future.

While it seems the Natalia learned a lot, she was not the only one who gained from this experience. Our students and our staff did as well. According to Esteban, “My students benefited in that there was another set of eyes in the room that they could turn to for help. They also appreciated seeing someone in college and having the opportunity to ask questions; it was awesome that she was with us for College Awareness Day! I benefited in that she helped with some tasks around the classroom and also that she asked really good questions about how and why I did things in my practice that provided me the opportunity for reflection.”

We, the parents, are grateful to the Q300 staff for participating in this program as it contributes to an enriching experience for all.

Meet the Family: Sheila Carrasquillo, Sherron Hines, and Nylise Hines



Meet another great Q300 family! Nylise Hines has been at Q300 since 2nd grade, and this is her fourth year. Below, she interviews her parents, Sheila and Sherron.

How did you both meet?

Sheila and I met in Flushing, Queens, on the shuttle bus headed to the airport. Only one seat was empty and it was across from Sheila. I sat down as I glanced at her. The sun was shining on her face and bringing out the gleam in her eyes. Our eyes locked and we stared at each other until the bus ride came to an end. Walking off the bus, we started to converse, and by the end of that day, I knew I met my best friend and future wife.

What do we like to do as a family?

During the summer we go to water parks, theme parks, Broadway plays, the beach, the zoo, and take long plane rides to far and fun places. We enjoy road trips to visit family and friends up and down the East coast.

What do you do professionally?

Sherron: I am a medical transportation provider. I make sure patients are picked up and dropped off when going to or returning from appointments and surgeries. Sheila: I currently work as an Instructional Math Coach for grades K-5. I support teachers in developing their math content, pedagogy, creating goals and next steps, leading workshops for teachers/parents, and providing continuous support to teachers. I love my role, however, there's nothing like teaching children. I taught in the classroom 14 years prior to coaching. I love my job because math sparkles a light in me deep within my soul. The laws of

mathematics are evident throughout the world and nature: the fractals found in tree branches, leaf patterns, the neurons in our brains, Fibonacci patterns found in pine cones, the petals on a flower, the concentric ripples of a pond when something hits the surface of the water. Math allows me to see the deliberate beauty of everything which surrounds me.

Can you share a glow and grow for Q300?

Sheila: My glow is that I love the community of families, teachers, and support staff at Q300. The love and kindness makes it feel like home. The children are beautiful people at Q300.

My "Grow": I would love to see Q300 embrace an Inquiry Based Learning model. It was wonderful to walk down the hall and hear the buzzing of children in "Book Clubs" followed by Socratic Seminars. Math lessons would be more about the "why" and less about the "how to". In math, children would be engaged in rich mathematical debate on conjectures rooted in justifications which lead them to their conclusions.

School Wellness Council Update

By Lynn Kennedy

Q300's Wellness Council formed officially last spring 2019. Together with parents, administration, support staff and teachers, Q300 identified preliminary goals, applied for a mini-grant this Fall, and successfully received a grant of \$2500 toward implementing identified goals!

Goals for the 2019-20 school year include a Physical Education goal to expand the annual calendar of sports and wellness activities that take place each month in order to meet our children's diverse needs and interests, bring families together, and increase knowledge of and capacity for educational opportunities related to exercise and general well-being, and a Health Education goal to explore and broaden a fuller range of health topics offered in order to equip students with both the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy choices and develop lifelong wellness practices.

Awarded monies for these goals include the purchase of needed exercise equipment identified by our Physical Education (PE) teacher, and staff time and support to facilitate additional wellness activities, special workshops, and peer training.

The aim has been to align some of our wellness goals with our overall school calendar while always striving to integrate different facets of our school's work by providing specific workshops throughout the year and working toward more vertical alignment of curriculum in preparation for the 2020-21 school year. Several workshops have been added by our Social Worker, Rachel Weiss, as well as family health and fitness events, added by Toni Anne Compuzano, our PE Teacher, in alignment with wellness goals. Additionally, the D30 Mental Health Consultant for our school has helped to connect Q300 with partners like Planned Parenthood to offer workshops to parents and The Hetrik Martin Institute.

The Wellness Council aims to meet monthly on goal progress, planning, and discussion on the 2020-21 school year. Future planning includes deepening the work this year to include potentially expanding CHAMPS programming to 5th graders if possible, planning for intramural sports with co-located partners, and collaboration with community partners to expand education within the school in regards to topics including: nutrition, general health, mental and emotional health, age appropriate body and developmental awareness, sexual identity, diversity, and building healthy relationships.

It has been a rigorous process to plan, coordinate and do outreach, and the team is very excited to see this off and running. For more questions, please connect with our AP, Anna Milonakis, who has taken the administrative lead on this initiative and for whom we thank for her perseverance and commitment to meeting goals.

Past and upcoming outings/workshops include:

- Perfectionism on 1/24 8:30am at LD
- Skate Trip for Families on 1/24 7-9pm
- Stress Reduction for Parents on 1/27 8:45am at UD
- Managing Testing Anxiety on 2/3 8:45am at UD
- Respect for All Assemblies on 2/10 (Upper Division) and 2/11 (Lower Division)
- Connected Chef Workshop 2/13
- Adult Role Models/ Difficult Discussions with Planned Parenthood (for parents) on 2/24, 3/2, 3/9, and 3/16 8:45 am at UD
- Basketball Tournament on 3/5 at UD
- Zumbathon on 4/3 at LD, and much more coming!

PTA Spotlight: Siobhan Watson

Interview by Neerja Vasishta



Editor's note: Siobhan has been kindly reporting on PTA meetings live on our Q300 PTA Facebook Page. This has been a great communication tool for those members who can't make the meeting but want to know what's happening in real-time.

How did you start documenting PTA meetings in this way?

When my daughter started at Q300, I joined the PTA Board because I thought it would be a good way to help out at the school and get to know the community. It was a great experience and I was very impressed by the strong PTA that we have! But a lot of families who are not able to get to the school on weeknights participate in other ways, and still want to hear what is happening at PTA meetings. We would often get requests for PTA meetings to be live-streamed so that parents who can't get there could still hear what was going on and have the opportunity to participate remotely. Live streaming is complicated, though, because cell reception isn't great in the auditorium at the school and the acoustics are terrible. Everyone is rushing to get to the PTA meetings when they start and no one was able to arrive early and get a good video/audio connection set up consistently. At a Board meeting, we talked about live-tweeting, but since we already had a lot of parents in the Facebook group, we decided it made the most sense to just use the existing group to provide live updates during meetings. A lot of people would follow along, especially when we first started doing it, and would ask questions by commenting on my updates—I'd try to ask their questions for them when I was able and update again with answers. DOE rules don't let PTA members vote remotely, but having comments from parents at home definitely seemed to make the conversations happening at PTA meetings accessible to more members of the school community.

Later, someone did volunteer to do a high-quality livestream, but we decided against taking them up on it for a couple of reasons. First, we were concerned that it might deter some people from asking questions and engaging in conversation at meetings if they knew they were being recorded. And second, some regular readers said they liked the live notes form—that way, if you're jumping into the meeting while it's in progress or catching up later, you can skim the notes more quickly than you could watch a recording of the whole meeting.

What's the hardest thing about doing this? How do people help you?

I think the hardest part is the same thing as what's hard for most families--getting to the PTA meetings on busy evenings. But if I'm there, I don't mind doing the notes and enjoy being able to provide updates to those who can't make it. Also, I am not always the one to do the updates--Sue Sekar and Maria Hantzopoulos are regular contributors and Amanda Spielman jumps in from time to time too. There have been some meetings where people have a lot of comments and questions from home, and in those cases I've asked others who are there to monitor the feed and ask questions for people who are chiming in online so that I can keep typing.

Is there anything that surprised you or has been striking about the experience?

It is pretty funny that most of the time when I introduce myself to a Q300 parent I don't know, they say, "Oh, the Q300 typist!"

Has this experience sparked any ideas or thoughts you want to share?

Well, for good reasons a lot of people have left Facebook over the past couple of years, and I do sometimes wonder if we should think about moving away from Facebook for meeting updates. But I'm not sure there is an alternative that would be used more widely--maybe something to keep thinking about as time goes on. Doing these updates has been a fun way of continuing to feel useful to the PTA even after I left the board. I enjoy it when people comment and let me know they are following along, so feel free to say hi if you are reading at home during a meeting!

SAVE THE DATE

- Feb 10 at 5:15pm: SLT meeting, Lower Division (Room 141)
- Feb 11 at 6:30pm: CEC30 meeting, PS12 (25-05 37th Ave, LIC)
- Feb 17-21: No school
- Feb 27 at 6:30pm: PTA meeting, Upper Division