



# Newsletter

30th Avenue School – Inclusion. Inquiry. Responsibility.

## JUNE 2020 ISSUE

As the school year comes to a close, we want to wish each and every one of you a fun and safe summer. It has been a school year for the history books - literally! Before we bid farewell to the 2019-20 school year, PTA Co-Presidents Lynn Kennedy and Milko Milkov reflect on all we accomplished this year as a community. Take a few moments to see what remote learning has looked like for our students and read about memories we have made together. Learn more about the Summer 2020 Read-a-Thon and find resources to help your family dive into discussions on race and systemic racism. Finally, join us in congratulating our Class of 2020 and thanking all in our community who have worked hard to meet the challenges of this school year.

## **A Message from Our PTA Co-Presidents**

*Lynn Kennedy and Milko Milkov*

Dear Fellow Q300 Families:

To say the least, the 2019-20 school year has been quite a year. None of us could have predicted how this year would develop. We hope that you, your families, and those close to you are doing well and remain healthy and safe.

This year has brought with it a wide range of emotions. We are deeply saddened by the losses our families and communities have directly experienced. We are grateful to our frontline workers for their enduring commitment to our city. We stand with our families and communities in ending systemic racism, reflecting on the many losses and pain, and processing what will be needed to create lasting change.

Within our school community, there is much to applaud and celebrate, even as we mourn the loss of not coming together in person. We appreciate the hard work of our school administration, teachers, and support staff in providing the best education and social emotional wellbeing support to our children, regardless of the circumstances. We commend our parents for their commitment and support of their children while enduring the immense stress of balancing remote learning and work. We celebrate the stepping up of our kindergarteners and 4th graders, and congratulate our 8th graders on graduating and moving onto a new chapter in their lives.

We want to thank the Q300 staff – old and new – for their dedication to our school. New teachers and staff joined our community this year: Nicole Gonzalez in 1st grade; Leanne Bolson in 2nd; Michelle Lin in 3rd; Alejandra Roma in 4th; Rebecca Silverman in 6th; Pamela Reyes in Spanish for Upper Division; Khary Chang as the Upper Division interim acting guidance counselor; and Joanne Daddio and Pamela Asaro, Pupil Accounting for Lower and Upper Division respectively. We also saw the departure of Principal Bill Biniaris and welcomed Sonita Ramkishun as Acting Interim Principal.

Although COVID-19 has taken a toll, there is much to be grateful for as we end this school year. In September, we wrapped up the Summer Read-a-Thon, with 3rd and 6th grade classes taking the lead. In October, we held our annual Costume Party, and November brought Gallery Night and Thanksgiving Day Pies. We joined with our co-located Lower Division school, P.S. 17, in December to hold Movie Night. The Q300 community came together in January for the annual International Potluck, one of our biggest events of the year. While other planned events like the Spring Zumbathon, the Stepping into Summer Auction, and Welcome Breakfasts were cancelled due to COVID-19, the school community activated during isolation to support frontline workers through donations, meals, and gift baskets. We are so grateful for all of the hard work that went into planning these events, and thank the PTA Board, other parent partners, and Jenny Lando, our Parent Coordinator, for committing so much of their time and skills to supporting the school. We look forward to seeing you all at future events when school reopens.

We want to thank everyone who has contributed to the PTA's work, whether through being on the Board, volunteering on a committee or at an event, writing for the newsletter, or making copies! We appreciate it all, especially the behind-the-scenes work that often does not get enough credit.

Thank you to our donors, who helped us raise \$296,000 through fundraising and Direct Appeal. We raised \$240,000 through Direct Appeal alone, which brought us 87 percent of the way towards our Direct Appeal goal of \$277,000 – a remarkable feat given school closures. Although our current financials appear optimistic, we remain cautious about our budget planning for next year given the unusual circumstances, pending DOE budget cuts, and an uncertain future.

That said, we invite all of you to consider the many opportunities to contribute to and be a part of the PTA community. We welcome all your ideas, talents, resources, and participation. In addition, we will hold Board elections in the fall, and there will be open spots, including three positions on the School Leadership Team, so please consider running for a position. When we all invest in our community, it becomes a more vital and meaningful contribution, building a stronger school for our kids!

Summer is around the corner and we wish all of you much needed rest, rejuvenation, and clarity to continue adjusting to the new New. Stay safe, be well, and much love to you all!

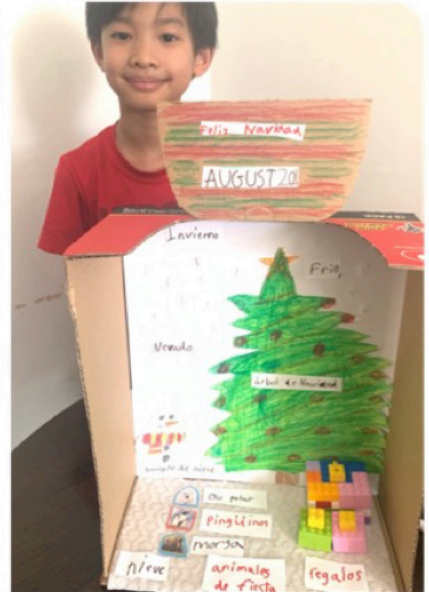
Lynn Kennedy & Milko Milkov  
Co-Presidents, Q300 PTA

## Scenes from Remote Learning

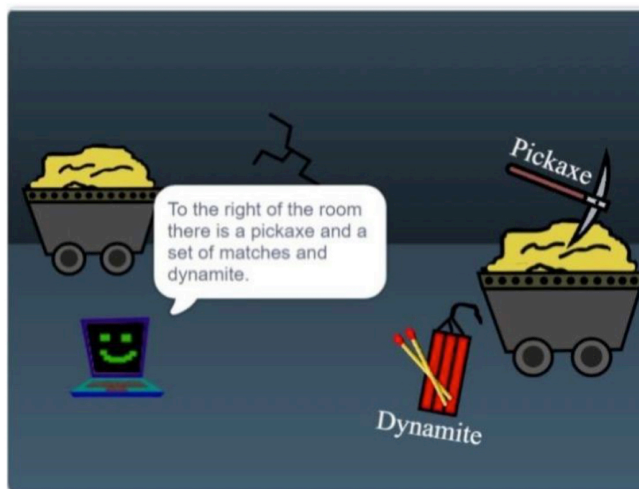


Clockwise from top left:  
Scarlett (kindergarten), preparing to move up to the first grade; Kate (2nd grade) showing off her first school poster; Evan (3rd grade) social distancing with his mom; Alexander's (1st grade) Earth Day art project.





Above: August (2nd grade) taking online chess lessons, creating dioramas for science and Spanish classes, and multitasking.



"The Smokey Truth," top, created by Katherine and Jasmine (both 6th grade), and "The Room (A Story Game)," middle, designed by sixth graders Alexandre and Samuel for deaf and blind individuals, won New York City Middle School division awards in the Games for Change Student Challenge. Kudos to Stephanie (6th grade) for being a finalist with "Diggin'," bottom, her game exploring the human-animal bond.

## Reflections from Students, Teachers, and Staff

Remote teaching and learning were not without their challenges. However, as students, teachers, and staff reflected on their experiences this Spring, they spoke about proud accomplishments, new opportunities to teach and learn, bittersweet memories of finishing out the school year, and what they look forward to the most when school buildings open up again.

### Nicholas Modestin, Student, Eighth Grade

Even though this school year was cut short, I will never forget the memories I have made with each and every one of you. Thank you, teachers, for all the hard work and dedication you guys put into your lessons in order to help me reach my full potential. I will never forget the fun activities you included in your classes, making school even more enjoyable. Thank you paras for always looking out for me, when it came to my health, my well-being, and my education. Thank you all for being there to support me. I do not know where I would be today without your guidance. You have all made a major difference in my life. Each one of you has helped me step one foot forward towards my dream of becoming a civil engineer. Thank you, and I will never forget any of you.

### Stephanie Praitnath-Teekasingh, Teacher, Second Grade

It was really important to me to have my students take part in a service learning project this Spring. Even with COVID-19, I was not going to let them miss out on this experience! As a class, we focused on protecting the environment by reducing pollution. Despite being at home and learning remotely, Class 201 took action and spread awareness in their communities. We used Padlet so students could share their work and creativity.

I will really miss my students and their families. They have been so incredible and supportive this school year, and I wish I could give them a face-to-face farewell as they move onto second grade. However, I'm also excited to meet my incoming students and families as we embark on a new learning expedition together.



Above: Class 201's Padlet to showcase their anti-pollution service learning project.

### Cristina Baron, Teacher, First Grade

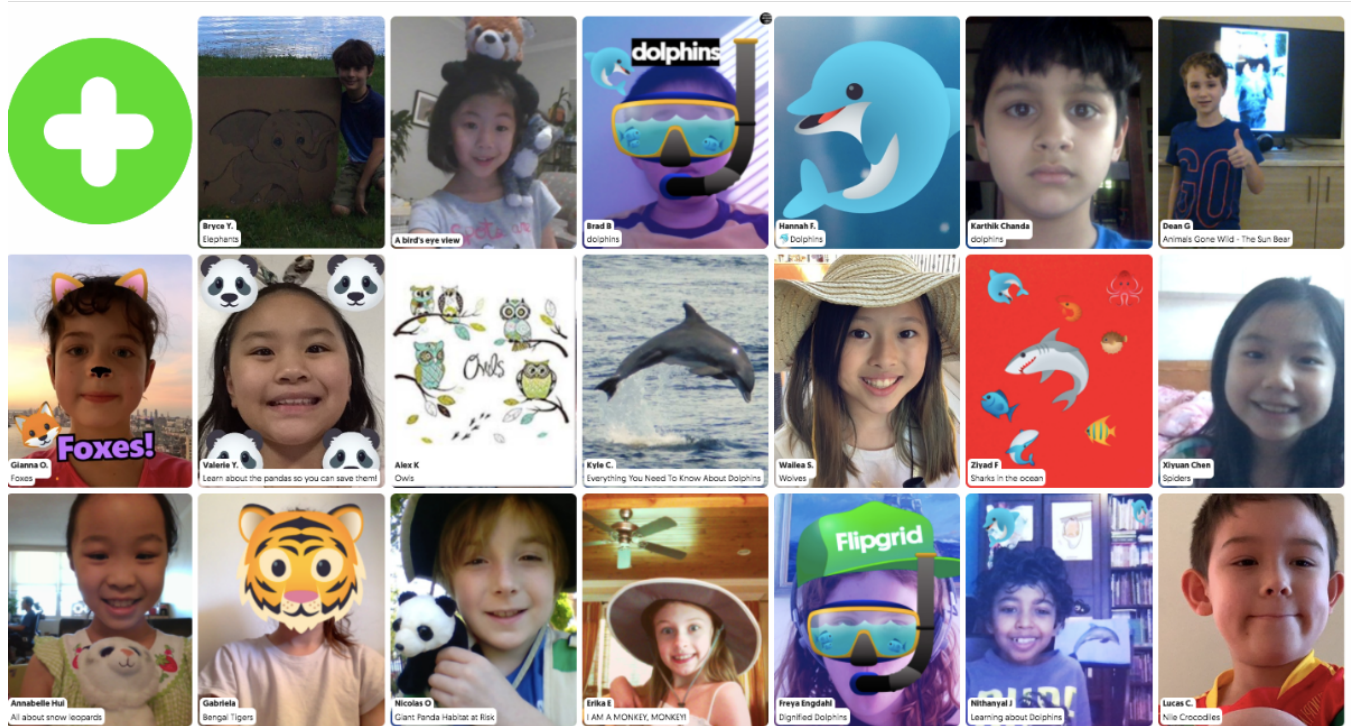
What I miss the most is seeing the children every day with their friends. I miss seeing them work with one another in the classroom. I miss seeing them help each other in many different ways, whether it was helping put backpacks in the closet or sharing their lunch if others forgot theirs. I truly miss seeing the collaboration and work they did together in partnerships and groups. I look forward to seeing the kids again all together, helping each other with their investigations, explorations, and play!



**Maria Panagiotakis, Teacher, Third Grade**

During remote learning, I am proud of the students for stepping out of their comfort zones and continuing to participate and attend the live Google Meet sessions. One of our projects required students to create an audio or video news report on a specific animal that they had researched. The students and I used Flipgrid for the first time to display our news reports and the students took the assignment to another level with their creativity and imaginations. I am so proud of how these news reports came out!

There are so many things that I miss about being in school, but more than anything, I miss my students, past and present. I miss the face-to-face interactions that we shared with each other, the high fives, fist bumps, and hugs. I miss the community we created within class 301, with all of us coming together to support one another during good days and bad. I miss their beaming smiles and energy that brightened our classroom. I miss the kids and I can't wait to see them in person again!



Above: A Flipgrid displaying Class 301's creative audio and video reports on their animal research.

**Rachel Weiss, Social Worker, Lower Division**

Happy vacation, Q300 students! I miss you all very much! I hope that you have a wonderful summer with lots of chances to play, learn, grow, and spend time with the important people in your lives. I hope I get to see you soon and I wish all of you and your families my best.

## **Join the Summer 2020 Read-a-Thon**

*Written by Claire Lui and Stephanie Peled, Co-VPs of PTA Fundraising*

This summer, we are reading again for Read-a-Thon, our summer fundraiser for the PTA. Funds pay for art and music enrichment classes, computers, and school supplies for students. Last year, our Read-a-Thon raised more than \$9,000! To participate in the Read-a-Thon, visit our Crowdrise page at [charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/2020-q300-summer-read-a-thon](https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/2020-q300-summer-read-a-thon).

Due to COVID-19, this school year is ending quite differently than expected, so we are introducing some new elements to Read-a-Thon:

- We have created a Flipgrid so Q300 families can share a video of their favorite books! Many Q300 students have been making Flipgrid videos for their classes during remote learning, and now they can use Flipgrid to share their book recommendations! You and your kids can recommend books for Lower Division (K to 4th grade), Upper Division (5th to 8th grade), or adults! Even if you do not choose to raise money for Read-a-Thon, we encourage you and your family to participate in our Flipgrid videos to help our community learn about your favorite books at [flipgrid.com/q300readathon](https://flipgrid.com/q300readathon).
- We will only be accepting donations electronically this year.
- Instead of a contest, as we have had in the past, this year we will be fundraising together as a school.
- If you're looking to buy new books for your kids, we have an ongoing partnership with [ChildrensBookstore.com](https://www.childrensbookstore.com). Begin your book shopping at [www.childrensbookstore.com/welcome/q300-book-fair](https://www.childrensbookstore.com/welcome/q300-book-fair) and 15% of all sales will go back to the Q300 PTA.

Learn more at <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/2020-q300-summer-read-a-thon> about the Read-a-Thon and get started today!

## Family Resources for Discussions on Race and Systemic Racism

As the Black Lives Matters movement has swept across the country in the last few weeks, many families have sought resources on how to begin having discussions with their kids about race, systemic racism, and activism. To support families who are looking to explore these discussions, the NYC Department of Education has curated resources to talk with children about race and current events and as well as mental health resources to address stress and trauma children and families may be experiencing at this time.

### How to Talk to Your Children About Race and Current Events

- Guidance for Family Conversations about George Floyd, Racism, and Law Enforcement (Anti-Defamation League)  
<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/george-floyd-racism-and-law-enforcement-in-english-and-en>
- Talking to Kids About Racism, Early and Often (New York Times)  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/parenting/kids-books-racism.html>
- 31 children's books to support conversations on race, racism and resistance (Embracerace)  
<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/20-picture-books-for-2020>
- Black Lives Matter Still Matters (Teaching Tolerance)  
<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2017/why-teaching-black-lives-matter-matters-part-i>
- Talking about Race for Parents & Caregivers (National Museum of African American History & Culture)  
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/audiences/parent-caregiver>
- Coming Together, Standing Up to Racism (Sesame Street)  
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/02/us/cnn-sesame-street-standing-up-to-racism/index.html>

### Mental Health Resources

- Managing Strong Emotional Reactions to Trauma (National Association of School Psychologists)  
<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/trauma/managing-strong-emotional-reactions-to-traumatic-events-tips-for-families-and-teachers>
- Radical Self Care in the Face of Mounting Racial Stress (American Psychological Association)  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/healing-through-social-justice/201911/radical-self-care-in-the-face-mounting-racial-stress>

### Free Mental Health Support

- NYC Well For Staff, students and parents
  - Call: 1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355)
  - Text: WELL to 65173
  - Live Chat

In addition, Rachel Weiss, social worker for Lower Division, recommended some additional resources for families to explore over the summer.

- Books, movies, and apps to think about current events; search using the terms "racism," "inclusion" or "diversity" for recently posted articles and reviews (Common Sense Media)  
<https://www.common Sense Media.org/search/racism>
- Thinking about Social Justice through Crafts and Conversation (Anti-Defamation League)  
<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/thinking-about-social-justice-through-crafts-and>
- Social Justice Book List for all ages (The National Network of State Teachers of the Year)  
<http://www.nnstoy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/NNSTOY-Social-Justice-Book-List.pdf>



- Tips for family conversations about current events and other resources specifically for families (Anti-Defamation League)  
<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources>
- Parent, family and caregiver resources to talk about current events and social justice (Anti-Defamation League)

In working with younger children, Ms. Rachel highlighted the value of read alouds to open up discussions, including books around similar events or understanding differences, as well as historical titles. To navigate the many read aloud lists available, she suggested that families preview specific read alouds on YouTube, look at book reviews on Publishers Weekly and School Library Journal, and get recommendations from children's bookstore staff.

## **Congratulations to the Class of 2020**

The end of the school year brings with it new beginnings for our eighth grade students. While graduation this year looks very different from how we had imagined it, the pride and joy we feel in celebrating our graduating Class of 2020 remains the same. We will miss our eighth graders so much, and we wish them lots of success in their adventures ahead!

Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

Riasat Audhy  
Avery Jordan Banas  
Lyla Black  
Emmett Andrew Marks  
Buchman  
Daniel Chang  
Inga Chen  
Isabelle Chen  
Talia Ziyun Cheng  
Bianca De Nola  
Oliver Fordham  
Emma Ivanova Hackbarth  
Daniel Hu  
Brandon Huang  
Morgan Kai Jones  
Akiva A. Joseph

Josephine Kasenter  
Michael C. Leong  
Alex Lin  
Allison Lin  
Nicole Lopez  
Amanda Louie  
Calvin Geronia Lyte  
Kikyo Marissa Makino-Siller  
Nicholas Sebastian Modestin  
Mohammed Musa Mubarez  
Hana Sakiko Nguyen  
Izabella Mercedes Orozco  
Diana Piergrossi  
Jefferson Ramales  
Domenic Rigazzi  
Amrisha Roy

Adam Ryan Sayah  
Naomi Florence Schultz  
Chenkai Zhang Shen  
Tenzin Dolkar Sherpa  
Zoie Hayden Sisolak  
Hassan Tariq  
Konstantina Tsahalidis  
Stanley Chen Tung  
Tibni Valle  
Annie Wang  
Alicia Camille Airoidi Wilbur  
Celeste Louise Airoidi Wilbur  
Lauren Xiao  
Ryan Lukas Young

**From Us to You: Thank You!**

Thank you to everyone in the Q300 community and beyond for your hard work, support, and feedback this Spring. Our heartfelt thanks go out to our essential workers for keeping our city running, the Q300 administration and staff for pivoting to remote teaching and support, and our families for juggling work, school, and child care in the midst of a pandemic.