On Saturday, October 18th, families and members of the Forest Hills community gathered in our back playground for our first annual Wellness Fair. It was a beautiful day, and everyone who came by got involved. Some children (and parents and grandparents!) ran through obstacle courses, while others tried their hand at tennis, soccer or karate. Tables around the perimeter were filled with information about leading a healthy lifestyle, and some were even filled with goodies to eat!

Thanks to the tireless work of our Wellness Council and Parents Association, the day went off without a hitch—and even raised nearly $900. Local vendors were happy to meet and greet so many families from the neighborhood, and kids and grownups alike were happy to take home key chains, water bottles and other swag!

If you weren’t able to make it this time, we hope to see you in 2015!

P.S. Later that week we found out that PS196 had been awarded a $2,500 grant by the New York City Department of Education’s Office of School Wellness Programs!

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**3 Key Ideas for Parents**

**About the Common Core**

**Thinking Deeply** - The Common Core emphasizes critical thinking. It requires students to analyze more, discuss, evaluate, justify and explain their thinking and understanding deeply, especially in writing. Really thinking deeply is hard. Let it BE hard, help your children talk it out.

**Integrating Learning** - The Common Core emphasizes learning across disciplines (reading, with math and social studies standards combined into one task). Students spend more time working together with different settings, structures and tools. Problems and solutions happens everyday in the real world.

**Showing How They Know** - The Common Core emphasizes proof & evidence. Long gone are the days of worksheets, fact memorizations and skill & drill. Students are not taught this way and they are not assessed this way. The new tests require students to explain how they know.

**Supporting the Common Core at Home:**

- Ask *why* when children tell you they want something or want to do or not do something.
- Ask your children to give you “text evidence” to support their opinions about a book.
- Give reasons— you to them and them to you.
- Encourage questions and explore answers (especially questions, whose answers are not yes or no.)
- Explain & discuss issues or problems in your house, neighborhood, and community. Brainstorm solutions.
- Compare how things are alike and different— videos, movies, food.
- Look for patterns.
- Describe and categorize.
- Tell your children what you value and why.
- Encourage and celebrate opinions.
**PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**
**THURSDAY, NOV. 13TH**

We look forward to greeting you at Parent-Teacher Conferences on Thursday, November 13th (1:00—3:00 p.m. and 5:00—8:00 p.m.). You should have received a letter from your child’s teacher to sign up for a conference time. Parent-teacher conferences are an opportunity for you and your child’s teacher to engage in conversations about student learning at home and in school. Research shows student achievement increases when parents/guardians, students, and teachers work as a team.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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**OPEN SCHOOL WEEK**

We look forward to welcoming you to your child’s classroom during Open School Week, November 17—21.

- **Monday, November 17**
  - Grade 1
  - 9:00 a.m.—10:15 a.m.

- **Tuesday, November 18**
  - Grade 4
  - 9:00 a.m.—10:15 a.m.

- **Wednesday, November 19**
  - Grade 3
  - 9:00 a.m.—10:15 a.m.

- **Thursday, November 20**
  - Grades 2 & 5
  - 9:00 a.m.—10:15 a.m.

- **Friday, November 21**
  - Grade K
  - 8:50 a.m.—10:05 a.m.

* Grade 5 parents will be entering the building through the old main entrance—the green doors.

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**Character Development—One Pillar at a Time**

During the school year, as part of our Community Read, we will be focusing on the 6 Pillars of Character education: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Through character education we will be developing positive character traits. The goal is to enable our children to flourish intellectually, personally and socially. Children also learn how to live and work together as families, friends and neighbors, and the importance of being a contributing, responsible citizen. This initiative also supports our zero-tolerance for bullying.

The children will listen to a read aloud text and be involved in many activities that connect to the Common Core Learning Standards for reading and writing, and involve critical thinking.

As a culminating activity for each of the Character Traits, we are asking the children to wear a color that is represented by the character trait. Trustworthiness is the first character trait, which we celebrated on October. Students and staff showed their commitment to trustworthiness by wearing something blue—think true blue!

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**Gifted and Talented Testing—Grades K, 1 & 2**

Any student who wishes to apply to New York City’s Gifted and Talented (G & T) elementary school programs must take the Gifted and Talented Test. All students in pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade, who are current New York City residents, are eligible for the tests. Students who score in the top ten percent are eligible for G & T programs in their local district. Students who score in the top three percent are also eligible for citywide G & T programs, although seats are limited. For more information about New York City Elementary School Gifted and Talented programs, please request a Gifted and Talented Test Handbook from our parent coordinator, Ellen Maurer. Applications can be done online at [http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/GiftedandTalented/default.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/GiftedandTalented/default.htm) or submitted to the main office. The deadline to submit an application for testing is November 7th.
**Report Cards**

All students will receive their report cards on Wednesday, November 12th. The reports cards can be returned to your child’s teacher during Parent-Teacher conferences on Thursday, November 13th. Please make sure that report cards are returned to school by Friday, November 14th, at the latest.

**Outdoor Play Policy**

According to the Department of Health and Department of Education policy, children should participate in outdoor play, even in colder weather. Please make sure your children are dressed appropriately. They should wear a coat every day, and when possible a hat & gloves/mittens. (Please make sure everything is LABELED with your child’s full name.) Unless it is raining, snowing or there is ice on the ground, the children will be outside for morning line-up and recess.

**PA’s Halloween Party**

On Saturday, November 1st, our students and their families will don their Halloween finest and join us for the Parents Association’s annual Halloween Party. Grades K-2—5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Grades 3-5—7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. There will be a costume contest, dancing to DJ sounds, face painting and more. We hope to see you there.

**Community Service—Penny Harvest & City Harvest**

Please continue to send in your pennies for Penny Harvest. In the past, we have collected more than $2,000, which enabled us to participate in a Round Table. Our Student Council members will research different organizations, and make the determination as to which ones will receive funds from the pennies we collected. Also, our annual City Harvest Food Drive will begin in December. Families can bring in canned goods to help feed the homeless.

**Author Nina Crews to Visit with Grade K—2 Students**

We are excited to announce that author Nina Crews will be visiting our school on Monday and Tuesday, November 17th and 18th. Ms. Crews will be speaking with students in grades K-2 about One Hot Summer Day and Sky High Guy. Ms. Crews is a critically acclaimed children’s book author and illustrator. She uses photographs and photo collages to create energetic stories about young children. We would like to thank our Parents Association for sponsoring Ms. Crews’s visit.

Students in grade 3-5 will enjoy an author’s visit by Renee Watson in December. Look for more information in next month’s newsletter.

**Parent Workshops......**

**Middle School: The Application Process—Tuesday, November 25th @ 7:00 p.m.—Evening Workshop**

Fifth grade parents/guardians are invited to a workshop entitled “Middle School: The Application Process,” presented by our parent coordinator, Ellen Maurer. Since 5th grade students will be receiving their Middle School Applications, this will be the perfect opportunity to ask Ms. Maurer questions or express any concerns you may have about the process.

**Data-Tech Workshop—The New Social Studies Standards—Monday, November 24th at 7:00 p.m.—Evening Workshop**

In October, Chancellor Carmen Fariña unveiled new Social Studies Standards for students in all grades. Please join Ms. Koatz for this month’s Data-Tech meeting, during which you will explore the new standards and their implications for classroom instruction.

**SAVE THE DATES:**

We are pleased to extend an invitation to all parents to join us on Wednesday, December 3rd and Wednesday, December 10th from 7:15—8:00 a.m. for parent workshops covering our curriculum, Ready Gen and GoMath. A teacher from each grade will be presenting a sample lesson to help parents further understand what the children are learning in their classrooms on a daily basis.
Dates to Remember...

- November 1 — PS 196 Halloween Party
- November 3 — Kindergarten Trip to Green Meadow Farms
- November 4 — SCHOOL CLOSED — Election Day
- November 5 — LUNCH COLLECTION
- November 10 — 2nd Grade (Class 202) Trip to Young Chef’s Academy
- November 11 — SCHOOL CLOSED — Veteran’s Day
- November 12 — Picture Retake Day
- November 12 — 2nd Grade (Class 231) Trip to Young Chef’s Academy
- November 13 — 2nd Grade (Class 201) Trip to Young Chef’s Academy
- November 13 — Parent Teacher Conferences — 1/2 Day — Noon Dismissal
- November 14 — 4th Grade Trip to Old Bethpage
- November 17/18 — Author Visit — Ms. Nina Crews — Grades K — 2
- November 17 — Parents Welcome for Open School, Grade 1 — 9:00 — 10:15 a.m.
- November 17 — 2nd Grade (Class 203) Trip to Young Chef’s Academy
- November 18 — Parents Welcome for Open School, Grade 4 — 9:00 — 10:15 a.m.
- November 18 — 2nd Grade (Class 204) Trip to Young Chef’s Academy
- November 19 — Parents Welcome for Open School, Grade 3 — 9:00 — 10:15 a.m.
- November 19 — 1st Grade Trip to Hall of Science
- November 20 — Parents Welcome for Open School, Grades 2 & 5 — 9:00 — 10:15 a.m.
- November 21 — SLT Meeting — 7:00 a.m.
- November 21 — Parents Welcome for Open School, Grade K — 8:50 — 10:05 a.m.
- November 24 — Kindergarten Trip to Queensborough College
- November 24 — Data-Tech Meeting — New Social Studies Standards, 7:00 p.m.
- November 25 — Star Student Awards — 7:00 p.m. & Parents Association Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- November 26 — Coffee and Conversation with Mrs. Migliano, 8:15 a.m.
- November 27 & 28 — SCHOOL CLOSED — Thanksgiving

**PS196Q 2014-2015 Goal Highlights**

- Our teachers will continue to use effective questioning and discussion techniques, in order to deepen students’ understanding across curricular areas. Teachers will use Charlotte Danielson’s component 3b and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge as resources for creating rigorous lessons, and planning for questioning and discussions.

- As a school committed to educating the whole child, we will continue to give our students the opportunity to participate in a variety of rich learning experiences in dance, music, theater and visual arts across the curriculum. Our efforts will be supported by our Parents Association, who will fund our Performance Arts program.

- We will reconfirm our commitment to the progress of our special education and at-risk students, especially those who scored levels 1 and 2 on the 2014 New York State ELA exam. Teachers will use the concepts of Universal Design for Learning and differentiation to embed multiple entry points into instruction, and we will measure their progress by analyzing their performance on the Measures of Student Learning (MoSL).

- Our entire community—students and staff—will be trained on and implementing the “Don’t Laugh at Me” system for character development and anti-bullying. This program will lead to more civil behavior among students, and a reduction in student-to-student conflicts.

- We will continue to welcome and engage parents in all aspects of our community, including taking leadership roles on our Wellness Committee, and participating in all school events. We will also work to increase our percentage of parent respondents to our annual School Survey by at least 10%.