



# WEDS NEWS

Fall 2017

## Message from Head of School

Central to our mission is the notion that we are a community. It is our strong partnerships, collaborative atmosphere, and our focus on relationships being crucial to our well-being that make West End Day such a happy and inspiring place. Our students clearly get the message that we can accomplish amazing things when we are working together. In the pages ahead, you will get a snapshot of the incredible learning and activities that have taken place during our fall semester.

I am particularly proud of our newly founded student council and how they were able to rally the whole community in support of the children of Puerto Rico. A huge thank you to Gabby, Jack, and Jamie for sticking behind it (and giving up lots of their "free time") to spearhead this drive. "Together We" collected over 60 backpacks full of goodies for these children in need. I am so grateful to the entire WEDS community for your enthusiasm and support!

The highlight of the semester was the Alumni Parent Cocktail Party. I was so delighted to reunite with such key members of our community and celebrate our former student's achievements post-WEDS! It was clear that we continue to be "more than a school" for many families that have moved on and it was wonderful to welcome them back home.

It now shouldn't be a surprise that we chose to celebrate our community for the theme of the year. I can't wait to see what is in store for this Winter! In the meantime, I'd like to give you a BIG thank you for a fabulous semester!

Carrie Catapano

## Upcoming Events

**January 8th** - School Re-opens

**January 15th** - MLK, Jr. Day (School Closed)

**January 25th** - Annual Art Exhibit

**February 15th** - Winter Sing

**February 19th - 23rd** - Mid-Winter Recess

**March 2nd** - All School Skate

**March 14th** - Parent/Teacher Conference



## Message from Education Heads

We have had a great first semester to start the school year. The fall has been filled with so many amazing learning experiences. Besides all of the learning that we have seen happening in the classrooms, the students have been participating in some wonderful assemblies. Our first assembly this year was with the Science Tellers. In this assembly, the presenter told a story about "tall ships and pirate tales." As he told the story he stopped to demonstrate various experiments that explored the science behind clouds, air pressure and more. The students really enjoyed the story and loved the exciting experiments. Next, we had the Ocean's Rock assembly where the students learned about ocean animals and even got to dig for shells and coral with hopes of finding a shark tooth. Coming up this winter, the students will be hearing from Manhattan School of Music with a strings concert as well as Symphony Space with a performance from the Spirit Men group, African musicians that will teach about their music.

Our professional workshop day this year was particularly exciting. We welcomed Andrew Watson, President of Translate the Brain. He spent a day with our staff speaking about learning and how the brain works with a particular focus on attention. During this interactive workshop, Andrew Watson focused on a neurological and psychological perspective to children's attention when learning and gave us meaningful strategies to bring into the classroom. It was an informative day and that left us eager to get back in the classrooms, but also to invite Andrew Watson back for trainings!

Looking forward to a winter filled with more exciting learning!

Katy Jenkins & Jessica Chambers

Co-Education Heads



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## Ms. Richard & Ms. Henry's Class

Our youngest class have been learning all about the world around them in their Science and Social Studies classes! In Social Studies the students have been examining aspects of communities, specifically community helpers, New York monuments, and world landmarks. They loved getting to use Google Earth to explore landmarks from around the world. The students put their engineering skills to work using Legos to create monuments. Science has been concentrated on animal studies this fall. Some of the topics covered include living versus non-living things, vertebrates versus invertebrates, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish. One week was dedicated to each of the five groups of vertebrates, allowing for lots of exploration into what classifies these animals. One science experiment they particularly enjoyed was simulating a fish's gills using a coffee filter, dirt, and water.

This year, the youngest classes have a Coding class incorporated into their weekly schedule. This concept was originally introduced using activities that required the children to follow directions, such as "Simon Says" and color by number. More recently they have begun to explore the "Code-a-pillar", an interactive caterpillar robot you can give directions to in order to get it to move. Additional pieces of the Code-a-pillar can be attached to dictate its movement. They have turned this into a game where they have to attach a code that gets the Code-a-pillar to a predetermined location in the classroom.



## Ms. Berger & Ms. Kaufman's Class

The class blasted off to a great start for the year! They are on their way to becoming true scientists, participating in several experiments and inquiry lessons throughout the semester. One of their favorites was an archaeological dig through a cookie to find all of the chocolate chips using only their hands and a toothpick! The students also enjoyed observing rocks and minerals in science. They sorted specimens based on color, texture, and hardness.

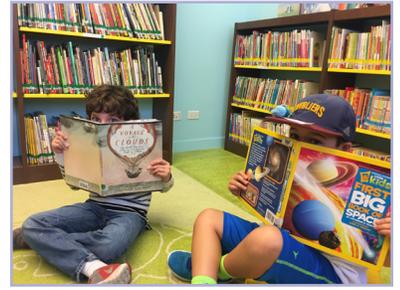
The class took their journey from outer space to their hometown, right here in New York City! In social studies, the students mapped out the five boroughs using clay to represent each section of their city. The class has also been learning about the history of the Big Apple and what it looked like before the skyscrapers and automobiles. The students were most excited to see the changes in Times Square, where we saw pictures of low buildings with horse and buggies. The class discussed that now Times Square is full of colors, bright lights, and the tallest buildings!



## Ms. flex & Mrs. Carhart's Class

This class of budding biologists finished their first science unit, Animals and Plants in their Environment. To start their unit, the class explored life cycles of a variety of plants and animals. They determined the sequence of life cycle events and discussed factors that can influence a life cycle's initiation and termination. To support these ideas, the class took a field trip to the Bronx Botanical Gardens to explore the life cycle of a pumpkin. Once there, the class discussed the features of a pumpkin, what helps it grow, and how new pumpkins are formed. Each student created their very own germination necklaces, in which they fertilized pumpkin seeds with the necessary nutrients needed to grow. The class expanded their knowledge of plants and animals by organizing living things into three categories—producers, consumers and decomposers—leading into a discussion of food chains within ecosystems. They designed an experiment in order to determine how energy within a food chain is passed from one living thing to the next. During the experiment, they transferred “energy” from producers to various consumers. The class determined that as energy is continually passed, a smaller amount is transferred each time. For their next unit, the class explored various forms of energy. They reviewed definitions of the different types of energy. The class conducted an experiment on heat energy in which they observed the movement of food coloring in cups of water with varying temperatures.

Their social studies class began by reviewing and identifying essential aspects of geography. The students reviewed a variety of map skills, and used their knowledge about the world around them to locate continents and oceans on a map. To conclude this unit, the class used balloons to create globes, which helped to locate hemispheres, continents, and major bodies of water. Currently, they have been working their way through studying New York State geography and local history. They defined and located various landforms, which provided a greater understanding of the physical features within New York. The class conducted research in which they were asked to identify both the physical, and political geographic features of New York State and New York City. The students have focused on answering the questions “what is geography?” and “why does geography matter?” With these questions in mind, the students have been able to study how geography affects how they live and where they live. The classroom activities and explorations have led to further discussions about the first inhabitants of New York and why they settled in this region.



## Ms. Fiasconaro & Mrs. Pile-Spellman's Class

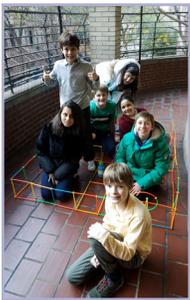
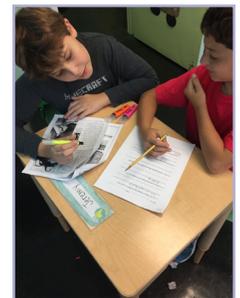
Social Studies adventurers have taken on the Western Hemisphere! They have spent the semester studying the geography of this region, including the relationship between humans and their environment. This created class discussions examining the movement of farming with a particularly in-depth look at the domestication of corn. They created a bubble-wrap corn craft highlighting crops specific to certain regions of the Western Hemisphere. To better understand their year of exploration ahead, the students created maps highlighting key geographical features of this part of the world, such as the Amazon and the Andes! They put down roots in South America studying the culture of that remarkable area of the world. Lastly, they embarked on a study of the ancient civilizations of the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas. They examined the advancements in science and architecture with creations of Mayan Lego temples and Aztec calendars!

In Science, the students are wrapping up their study of ecosystems. They have identified components of ecosystems, classified organisms by how they obtain energy, and learned about how living and nonliving things depend upon each other for survival and life processes. In October, the students took a field trip to Pier 40 to explore the Hudson River and the impact that humans have to the river, animal species, and the river's function as an estuary. They investigated touch tanks and checked traps filled with local organisms from the river. Most recently, the class investigated the anatomy of their class pets, shrimp and pond snails. Using compound microscopes, the students viewed pond water, algae, and aquatic plants at the cellular level.

## Ms. Moss & Mrs. McGowan's Class

The students have expanded their knowledge of the countries of the Western Hemisphere this semester. After a review of map skills and geography, the class delved into the ancient civilizations of the Maya, Aztec and Inca. The class had the opportunity to take a virtual tour of some of this culture's great city-states such as Chichen Itza, in what is now Mexico, and Machu Picchu in Peru. The students were amazed to learn about the Mayan number system as well as the importance that math and astrology played in the design and building of these great city-states. To help the class gain more insight into what life may have been like for these civilizations, the class had the opportunity to make their name in Mayan glyphs, create Aztec sunstones with oil pastels, and made Incan Quipu out of yarn.

In Science, the students began the year discussing the steps of the Scientific Method. They conducted experiments where they were asked to form hypotheses and identify different variables. The students collaboratively designed their own experiment to test out the different liquid densities of soap, water, honey, and rubbing alcohol. They were responsible for controlling the experiment and writing the results. Then the students began the health and nutrition unit. They learned about different food groups, how to read nutrition labels, and how to be heart healthy. The students practiced reading nutrition labels when they examined the amount of sugar in a variety of different beverages. Additionally, they learned how to take their pulse and compared their heart rate when they were sitting at their desk versus after walking up flights of stairs.



## Mr. Kassel & Mrs. Michilovich's Class

The students are becoming seasoned explorers of the Eastern Hemisphere! After a review of map skills and an overview of the geographical features of the eastern world, the students travelled back to prehistory for a unit on the Neolithic Revolution. They examined how early humans transitioned from nomadic hunter-gatherers to agricultural societies. The students then completed a long-term project based on their findings where they convinced nomads to join the Neolithic Revolution to become part of a farming society. The class moved on to the Ancient River civilizations that developed during this Agricultural Revolution, namely Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley. They observed how these civilizations developed in similar ways as they all relied on rivers to expand.

In science, the class began the fall semester with a review of the scientific method and experimental procedures. The students practiced designing experiments and following the steps of the scientific method through hands-on inquiry lessons. They especially enjoy "Can You Stomach This?" where they investigated what food would digest most efficiently. They modeled a stomach using a plastic bag with seltzer acting as the acid and their hands representing the stomach muscles. Next, the class began their unit on Weather. They studied the water cycle and cloud formation. After learning the variables that effect weather, such as air temperature and pressure, they explored Extreme Weather as a long-term project. The students were assigned a storm to research. They created a presentation to teach their classmates about their findings.



**Halloween**

We had such a Spook-tacular Halloween Festival! Our wonderful Parents Association out did themselves and put together an exciting event where our students enjoyed Halloween-inspired activities, games and delicious treats! The students had a blast showing off their creative and unique costumes.



**Assemblies**

This fall, we had two exciting assemblies with science themes. First, ScienceTellers visited WEDS for an adventure on the high seas. Sciencetellers combines storytelling and science experiments into a theatrical learning experience. The students observed and participated in experiments involving dry ice, flash paper, and water, among the many exciting demonstrations included in the show. Next up, Dinosaurs Rock came for their assembly Oceans Rock! This show presents how people use items from the Oceans in their everyday lives. The students also learned about and had the opportunity to touch fossils of marine life. To finish off the afternoon, each student participated in the Sea Shell Dig where they were able to search for and take home sea shells from around the world, fossil shark teeth, and other marine artifacts. These assembly companies continue to be tremendous hit with the students!





## Community Thankfulness Event

Our WEDS family came together with incredible support for our Community Thankfulness Event! Our strong community of families, staff, and of course students donated school supplies and their time for the "Packing Support for Puerto Rico" initiative. We were so impressed with the turn out to help us organize and assemble the backpacks for the Puerto Rican students in need. A special thank you to the student council and their staff advisor, Ms. Michilovich, for their organization leadership in putting the project together.



## Alumni Parent Reception

We are always excited for the opportunity to bring the WEDS community together. Our Alumni Parent Cocktail Reception was such a wonderful night for our staff and both our current and former parent body. The night was a great way to catch up with old friends, make some new friends and share stories. This wonderful event fully displayed why this community truly makes us "more than a school."

