

# Greenwich PTA Council

# ANNUAL REPORT

July 2020 - June 2021



## Greenwich PTA Council Mission:

The Greenwich PTA Council works with National PTA, Connecticut PTA, the Board of Education, Greenwich Town Government, community partners, our 14 Committees and our 15 member PTAs to support the students, staff and families of the Greenwich Public Schools to advocate and work to improve the education, health and welfare of all children and youth.

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*The power of the PTA in  
three words...*

**FAMILY  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**

JIM ACCOMANDO  
NATIONAL PTA PRESIDENT 2017-2019

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# *every child. one voice.*

PTA support led to more involved families  
and additional academic growth for students  
in Greenwich Public Schools in 2020-2021.

- PTA Council held public sessions on Family Engagement, GPS Humanities, Teaching and Technology, and Improving Student Writing
- Remote School Special Committee presented “Parenting During Remote Learning” and “How to Keep Children Engaged During Remote Learning.”
- Special Education Support Committee sponsored a four part series for families to learn strategies for addressing behavioral challenges.
- Health and Wellness Committee presented “Posture Awareness.”
- PTA Council met with BOE Strategic Planning Committee to discuss comments relating to the draft Committee survey.
- PTA Council co-sponsored with the League of Women Voters Greenwich two budget related forums open to all community members.



## **Advocated and Educated**

- Council engaged with the Board, BET and RTM, to support the BOE FY 2021-2022 Budgets.
- Council encouraged parents to speak up in support of the schools and especially for funding for our schools. As a result, hundreds of parents attended Town meetings (virtually and in person) and many spoke to support their positions.
- Supported parents working on SEAC (Special Education Advisory Council) and on the Special Education Review Steering Committee, working to improve Special Education support for students and parents
- Remote School Special Committee, with funding provided by Greenwich Alliance for Education and ISD PTA, provided virtual programs for over 500 Remote School Elementary students.

## **Promoted and Supported**



# Advocated



PTA Council adopted a more aggressive approach toward advocacy this year. Points raised at BOE and Superintendent meetings were pursued in subsequent months. A PTA Council Advocacy Framework for Long Term Priorities was adopted to provide focus and processes to achieve long term goals.

# Supported



PTA Council provided guidance to the 15 PTAs in areas such as purchasing of gifts for their schools and for newsletter contents. This guidance has been (or is being) reduced to writing to provide consistency across the years.

# In '20-'21

## 18%

**% decrease in membership, likely due to pandemic**

## OVER 1 Million Dollars \*

**budgeted donation to district schools**

## OVER 500

**# of PTA volunteers (numbers limited due to COVID 19)**

## 8,893

**# of students served**

## 85

**# of leaders trained to support PTA mission**

\*Actual amount less due to COVID-19

# *2020-2021 Areas of Focus*

**GOAL: ADVOCATE:** PTA Council will focus our efforts on advocating for the needs of our students and the district. We will provide feedback to enable the district to ensure that the learning provided is as close as possible to a normal school year, so as to not impact students and not widen the achievement gap. All of the endeavors of the BOE and the district, and the actions of PTA Council, will be viewed through the lens of improved learning. The efforts will likely include engagement with the district on:

- Social and Emotional Support for students and teachers
- Personalized Learning
- Digital Device Use
- Strategic Plan Review
- District Programs Review
- Special Education Review

**RESULTS:** PTAs and PTA Council provided detailed feedback to the BOE, the Superintendent, and the cabinet via monthly meeting comments to the BOE and monthly direct meetings with our BOE liaison, frequent direct meetings with the Superintendent (monthly Council meetings, brown bag meetings with Board of Directors, monthly officer meetings), and periodic meetings between committees and cabinet members. Feedback included the need for an improved SEL program, leading to the pilot of RULER at EMS in 2021-22; the need for more powerful laptops to manage remote learning; and comments on the draft Strategic Plan survey. Feedback was also provided by continuous involvement of concerned parents on the Special Education Review steering committee and from the Remote School Special Committee. Notable gaps in results include feedback on personalized learning and the District Program review, as both of these initiatives appear to have been suspended.

**GOAL: COORDINATE:** PTA Council will continue to support the PTAs through the coordinating efforts of the Council Committees, as well as through the provision of training in such areas as procedures, nominating, event forms, scam awareness and, in partnership with the district, web page maintenance and gift cap.

**RESULTS:** Most of the assistance provided by PTA Council to PTAs related to individual PTA issues. Council provided guidance to all PTAs for gift purchasing, as this was a major concern at the beginning of the year. Council is also drafting guidance on newsletter content, focusing on what events are acceptable to advertise, depending on a variety of factors.

Council worked with the various PTAs during the budget process to support the funding for planned building upgrades at JCS and OGS. Council encouraged the sharing of fundraising ideas during the Roundtable portion of PTA Council meetings. Individual PTA Council committees served as coordinators for multi-school efforts relating to curriculum, remote school learning, special education, and mental and physical wellness during the pandemic. Most of the planned training sessions noted above were not held. The limited number of questions received on these topics (aside from gift procedures and scams) indicated that this omission was acceptable. Given the rising number of scams, additional training was done during the yearly Council members training in June.

# *2020-2021 Areas of Focus*

**GOAL: COMMUNICATE** Council will also look to formalize the communication link between the PTA Council Board of Directors and PTA Presidents, to provide more rapid dissemination of information on issues that affect Greenwich, our Public Schools and our students.

## **RESULTS:**

The First Vice President served as the conduit to the PTA Presidents (and others) of notices, reminders and information gathered at various meetings. Frequent “PTAC Reminders and Useful Info” notes were sent to Council members. This information was effective in keeping everyone informed of events and feedback from district leaders.

PTA Council also initiated steps to improve the frequency and quality of communications between Council committees and district administrators, as well as communications from the district, schools or teachers to parents. Suggestions for improvements will be discussed with Dr. Jones in the near future.

**GOAL: IMPROVE:** To support more informed advocacy, we will investigate means of gathering ideas, thoughts, and opinions from PTAs in a rapid fashion, where appropriate and allowed by bylaws. We will also encourage parents to be directly involved via in-person or virtual attendance at Board of Education and other Town meetings which impact education.

## **RESULTS:**

We did not implement a means of gathering opinions from PTAs in a more rapid fashion. Rather we sought feedback during Council meetings. The nature of issues this year did not require a more rapid process, but it is something that should be considered in the future.

The availability of virtual meeting attendance allowed a significant increase in attendance at town meetings (one BOE meeting had over 400 attendees), and PTA Council has expressed its belief that this mechanism should continue in the future, even with the resumption of in-person meetings.

# ***Looking Ahead: 2021 -2022***

GOAL: ADVOCATE. PTA Council will continue to advocate for the needs of our students in the district. Most of our students will be returning to full-time in-school learning and that brings with it a healthy dose of hope. Our district will be looking to assess where learning gaps are, and how best to address them, and PTAC stands ready to support the district in their goals. We are also happy to assist in any way needed with the upcoming SPED review implementation plans, next steps in the ALP review process, and other district goals as they are presented. We will continue to provide feedback where needed and act as a conduit from the schools to the district and vice versa. We are also happy to report that we are creating a special committee for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which will fall under the VP-at-Large position in our organizational structure.

All of the endeavors of the BOE and the district, and the actions of PTA Council, will be viewed through the lens of improved learning. To name a few, the efforts will likely include engagement with the district on: Social and Emotional Support for students and teachers, Academic Excellence, Digital Device Use, Strategic Plan Review, Special Education Review.

GOAL: COORDINATE. PTA Council will continue to support the PTAs through the coordinating efforts of the Council Committees, as well as through the provision of training in such areas as procedures, nominating, event forms, scam awareness and, in partnership with the district, web page maintenance and gift cap.

GOAL: COMMUNICATE. Council will continue to look for ways to formalize the communication link between the PTA Council Board of Directors and PTA Presidents, to provide more rapid dissemination of information on issues that affect Greenwich, our Public Schools and our students. We will continue to provide feedback to the district on best practices for communications to families. We fully support the use of the district web site to act as a repository / library for important documents and communications.

GOAL: IMPROVE. To support more informed advocacy, we will investigate means of gathering ideas, thoughts, and opinions from PTAs in a rapid fashion, where appropriate and allowed by bylaws. We will also encourage parents to be directly involved via in-person or virtual attendance at Board of Education and other Town meetings which impact education. This past year's highly-attended zoom BOE calls showed that our parents want to be engaged, and we look forward to zoom-options continuing.

# *Key Accomplishments of Unit PTAs*

PTA Council supports the 15 PTAs in the Town of Greenwich. Each PTA deserves praise for the contributions made every year to our schools, especially in this most unusual of years. The appendix of this report details the contributions made by the PTAs to the schools in the areas of curriculum enrichment, social and emotional learning, family and community engagement, and facilities. While the Greenwich school PTAs are similar, it is in the execution of the support provided that each PTA's distinct personality comes through.

While many of the unique programs and fundraisers were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PTAs did not stop their work just because buildings were closed. Our 15 PTAs continued to work hard to advocate for the needs of all children by sharing vital information and providing feedback.

See Appendix for details of the work done by PTAs in areas of Curriculum Enrichment, Social and Emotional Learning, Family and Community Engagement, and Facilities.

# *Key Accomplishments of Committees*

Each of the PTA Council Committees worked to develop objectives, establish means toward those goals (especially challenging in this pandemic year), and assess the implementation of the initiatives. The Committees also facilitated meetings on a variety of topics, managed the information flow when concerns arose, and worked to proactively improve parents' perception of the PTAs and the District by communicating successes.

See the Appendix for each individual Committee report.

**"WHEN YOU BELONG TO PTA, YOU HARNESS YOUR  
COURAGE AND COMMITMENT TO CREATE RELATIONSHIPS THAT  
HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE  
THE EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND  
ACROSS THE COUNTRY."**

-Nathan R. Monell, CAE  
National PTA Executive  
Director





# PTA COUNCIL ESSENCE AWARD

**Without volunteers the PTA would not exist.**

The PTAC Essence Award recognizes an outstanding PTA member of the Greenwich Public Schools PTA communities who, through exemplary achievement, has inspired others, demonstrated selfless spirit and made a significant difference in our school community.



## **2021 Essence Award Winner**

**Joan Lynch**

## **2021 Lifetime Essence Award Winner**

**Cricket Dymant**

## **2021 Essence Award Nominees**

Emily Brown, Riverside School  
Gia Burton, Old Greenwich School  
Cricket Dymant, Greenwich High School  
Jennifer Frimere, Hamilton Avenue School  
Joan Lynch, Greenwich High School  
Diana Orbanowski, Central Middle School  
Frances Wu Nobay, North Street School

**PTA Council**  
**2020-2021 Board Of Directors**

<b>President</b>	Brian Peldunas
<b>First VP</b>	Mimi Duff
<b>Secretary</b>	Clare Kilgallen
<b>Treasurer</b>	Leslee Spadone
<b>VP of Nominating</b>	Nerlyn Pierson
<b>VP of Curriculum</b>	Rosemary Hyson
<b>VP of Enrichment</b>	Cindy Lyall
<b>VP of Facilities</b>	Ann Marie Bulis
<b>VP of Student Support</b>	Kathy Walker
<b>VP of Recognition</b>	Valerie Rimmer
<b>VP at Large</b>	Renee Jennings
<b>Past President</b>	Cricket Dymont

**2020-2021 Committee Chairs**

<b>AE</b>	Jessica Enright Polanish	<b>Green</b>	Kathy McCormack
<b>AE</b>	Ana Laborde	<b>Green</b>	Ann Yardis
<b>ALP</b>	Jenn Donat	<b>H&amp;W</b>	
<b>ALP</b>	Irina Anguelova	<b>H&amp;W</b>	Bevan Talbott
<b>ALP</b>	Michelle Lopez	<b>Scholarship</b>	Maureen Bonanno
<b>Afters</b>	Frances Wu Nobay	<b>Scholarship</b>	Lori Fields
<b>Afters</b>	Monica Huang	<b>SES</b>	Caroline Lerum
<b>CE</b>	Katherine McKersie	<b>SES</b>	Doreen Conte
<b>CE</b>	Alejandra Fajardo	<b>Sp. Programs</b>	Jessie Bennett
<b>Directory</b>	Patricia Carey	<b>Sp. Programs</b>	Aimee Muth
<b>DL</b>	Alison Hoenig	<b>2E</b>	Robin Leader
<b>DL</b>	Cathy Goldstein	<b>2E</b>	Kathleen Yu
<b>ECE</b>	Janet Stone McGuigan	<b>FRC</b>	Lisa Bishop
<b>Essence</b>	Alison Hoenig	<b>FRC</b>	Doris Meinelt
<b>Essence</b>	Marla Leamon Nedder	<b>FRC</b>	Soeren Eisenbiess

**Special Committee Chairs**

<b>Remote School</b>	Frances Wu Nobay
<b>Remote School</b>	Bob Chaney
<b>Student Activities</b>	Ginny Hoffman

**PTA Council**  
**2020-2021 PTA Co-Presidents**

<b>GHS</b>	Terry Lamantia	<b>JCS</b>	Michele Tierney
	Stephanie Cowie (incoming)		Jill Ernst (incoming)
<b>CMS</b>	Diana Orbanowski	<b>NMS</b>	Elizabeth DeHaven
	Brian Zeller (incoming)		Sarah Klocinski (incoming)
<b>EMS</b>	Stephanie Bastek	<b>NLS</b>	Dawn Zimmerman
	Mickaela Kull-Baig (incoming)		Melissa Truelove (incoming)
<b>WMS</b>	Natalie Adee	<b>NSS</b>	Dina Urso
	Tammy Scollard (incoming)		Megan Kelly (incoming)
<b>CCS</b>	Nicole Ehret	<b>OGS</b>	Carolyn Petersen
	Dani Rossi (incoming)		Erica Jacoby (incoming)
<b>GVS</b>	Kristen Hawreluk	<b>PKY</b>	Meredith Curreri
	Kathy Benezu-Gonzalez (incoming)		Rachel Smith (incoming)
<b>HAS</b>	Kristi Castellon	<b>RSS</b>	Heeyoon Slater
			Carey Bisbee (incoming)
<b>ISD</b>	Angie Hartofilis		
	Kristine McCue (incoming)		

## PTA Council Committee Accomplishments

### Academic Excellence Committee

The Academic Excellence Committee embarked on a new relationship with new Chief Academic Officer, Marc D'Amico, and continued its work with Dr. Ann Carabillo, Assistant Superintendent.

Despite the pandemic and its limitations, AE Co-Chairs Ana Laborde and Jess Enright-Polanish were able to connect and collaborate with D'Amico frequently. AE arranged for four Workshops, open to all AE Reps and GPS parents. These Workshops enable the school district to communicate information regarding new and current curricular programs. These Workshops also allow AE Reps and parents to share their questions and feedback, as related to their individual schools. This year, AE organized the first Q&A with D'Amico, Carabillo and all Department Heads.

#### This year's Workshops included:

- November 17: Link It Assessment: Trends and Applications
  - January 26: School-Home Connection (organized by Carabillo)
  - March 25: **Q & A with D'Amico and K-8 coordinators**
  - May 11: Middle School Preparedness with CMS & WMS principals and NMS 5th grade teacher
- (June: we anticipated a Workshop from Lori Elliott regarding ELA curriculum, however she announced her resignation)

Curriculum, and **communication** regarding curriculum, became a dominant and sometimes controversial topic in Greenwich this school year. Several BOE Meetings featured heated comments from parents regarding curriculum in GPS. AE continued to be involved in the conversation- with PTAC, with AE Reps, with D'Amico, and with GEA President Carol Sutton.

#### AE Reps expressed interest in and discussed the following topics this year:

- The organization and layout of GPS website and individual school webpages
- Access to curriculum and units of study for elementary
- **Consistency** of curriculum across elementary and middle schools
- Parent-Teacher Conferences at the elementary level (two per school year as a district norm)--- **this was a formal request put to GPS**

- Consistency and amount of homework at elementary and secondary--  
**at our request, D'Amico formally reiterated the homework policy, as per the BOE, to all Principals and schools to encourage more consistency (and appropriate amount of homework per grade level)**
- Consistency of communication (S'mores, Newsletters, etc.) at the elementary level from school admin and grade-level teachers

Some other notable "highlights" from this year:

- Created beginning and end-of-year Google Slides presentation on AE Committee and role of AE Reps
- Created Google Sheets form and solicited feedback from Reps on their individual school webpages
- AE worked more closely with Digital Learning Committee, and with Health and Wellness Committee
- AE met with the President of the Teacher's Union (GEA), Carol Sutton, for the first time and hopes this will continue next school year
- AE Committee spoke during Public Comments section of April and May BOE Meetings- in support of **CONSISTENCY, TRANSPARENCY**, and **EXCELLENCE** in our schools and in support of GPS teachers
- AE Co-Chairs had more access to and communication with D'Amico
- AE Co-Chairs and VP of Curriculum have been invited to meet with D'Amico and all new Curriculum Coordinators in July 2021

**We continued the conversation around the role of and access of AE Reps at the**

**individual school level.** Covid did nothing to mitigate the fact that, as noted in previous years' Committee Reports, AE Reps continued to experience confusion and frustration **regarding their role on and access to their schools' PTA and their administration.** It is worth repeating that AE Reps require more access to their own school conversations in order to be a bridge between GPS and PTAs. **As the topic of curriculum, and parent access to curriculum, continue to dominate GPS and the community- it seems all the more important for AE Reps to have a voice at the school level as well as provide feedback at the district level. AE Reps should have a role in each school's SIP Family & Community Engagement Goal.**

It is suggested that AE Reps have regular meetings with their PTA presidents, in addition to the school principal so that their efforts are more integrated with PTA

initiatives. Some individual schools (such as ISD) have added a non-voting AE Rep role to their Executive Board. It is suggested that further cementing the role of the AE Rep at the school level be a GOAL for 2021-2022.

The following is also suggested:

1. A minimum of six AE Workshop dates, to be agreed upon in early summer prior to the upcoming school year
2. AE Workshop dates should be posted on MASTER CALENDAR on GPS website and via each schools' individual calendars before September
3. A universal, streamlined means of summarizing and sharing the content/presentation of each Workshop (that could then be easily shared via each schools' Newsletters/PTA webpages). Perhaps the AE Committee could have its own Newsletter?
4. All Workshops should be recorded and uploaded to GPS website for easy access for parents that were unable to attend live/in person
5. Principals should be expected to meet with their AE Reps a minimum of 2x per year, with or without PTA presidents, in the Fall, and Spring to share SIP details.
6. As previously mentioned, AE Reps should have regular meetings with PTA Presidents and occasionally be guests at PTA Board meetings to present and discuss curriculum with their PTA board.

In closing, AE Reps and parents across Greenwich continue to be HIGHLY invested in their children's curriculum and education. We are interested in learning more, sharing more, and strengthening the link between individual schools, homes, and the overall GPS administration. Communication and community are more important now than ever before and we look forward to continuing this work!

## **Afters Committee**

Before and Afters Programs are offered as enrichment programs in GPS elementary schools outside of the school day. Before and Afters are administered by a dedicated group of PTA volunteers. Each school's PTA decides its programs (the times, durations, days, structures, and subjects). Schools offer a wide variety of classes with opportunities for students to try new activities and improve academic, athletic and artistic skills. Afters enrich and enhance in-school learning in all disciplines, foster new friendships, and allow the kids to have fun.

Unfortunately, this year we were unable to offer in-school Afters programs, but instead we had one of our outsourced companies, "Greenwich After School" provide virtual classes, not only to their client schools, but to any Greenwich Public School elementary student.

The chart below shows which schools/students took advantage of this opportunity:

	<b>FALL</b>	<b>WINTER 1</b>	<b>WINTER 2</b>	<b>SPRING</b>	<b>Total By School</b>
Cos Cob	8	7	5	3	23
Glenville	3	3	3	1	10
ISD	24	20	10	8	62
New Leb	2	2	3	0	7
N. Mianus	25	20	10	3	58
OGS	42	46	43	11	142
Riverside	5	5	1	0	11
	109	103	75	26	313

A few of the most popular classes included chess, Lego at Home: STEM Fundamentals and various arts & crafts classes.

The PTAC Afters Committee did not meet this year, but we hope to in the fall and continue to host a forum for Afters representatives to share best practices and new class ideas.

## **Curriculum Enrichment Committee**

The Curriculum Enrichment (CE) Committee provided support by planning and implementing curriculum-supporting programs for students that are paid for by the PTA. During the 2020-21 school year, PTAC CE identified four goals:

1. Networking and information sharing
2. Support virtual C/E Programming and the Greenwich Remote Learning School (GRLS)
3. Documentation and Information Transfer
4. GPS Assured Experiences /Discussion of pilot program sharing of C/E across the schools

### **NETWORKING AND INFO SHARING**

The Curriculum Enrichment Committee created a list of PTA presidents, CE Reps and other interested PTA members at all GPS schools. The Curriculum Enrichment Committee also established an email network to communicate with CE Reps to share information, best practices, news about vendors, resources and otherwise support the implementation of PTA-sponsored enrichment programs. Over the course of the school year, the Curriculum Enrichment Committee hosted four virtual meetings: the first meeting featured a presentation by GPS heads of curriculum (Marc D'Amico and Laura Newell) who shared updates on curriculum and ideas for intersections with enrichment and a review of the paperwork required to administer CE programs. The second meeting allowed for CE reps to share their unique experiences of virtual programming; the third meeting was held in the evening per the request of some of the Committee and finally our last meeting of the year was a robust discussion of what CE will look like next year.

### **SUPPORT OF REMOTE CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT/GREENWICH REMOTE LEARNERS SCHOOL**

The Curriculum Enrichment Committee helped CE Reps understand the necessity and delivery of Curriculum Enrichment during this extraordinary year of the pandemic. Over the course of the school year, the Curriculum Enrichment Committee hosted four virtual meetings, three during the day, and one in the evening, which allotted time for a review of the required steps to administer CE programs virtually. In addition, the Curriculum Enrichment Committee maintained a library of completed liability insurance forms for CE Reps, as well as additional instruction for the required steps when delivering and sharing virtual C/E programs both to in-person and to remote learners. In addition, the CE Committee provided support to the GRLS and the two additional CE reps from that school. A unique partnership between the Greenwich Alliance for Education and the GRLS was established and supported to aid in delivering unique programming to the more than 600 children in the pandemic-established remote learning school of K-5 learners.

### **DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION TRANSFER** The Curriculum Enrichment



Committee maintained a shared drive of CE materials to be passed on to future Curriculum Enrichment Committee chairs. The Curriculum Enrichment Committee also solicited feedback and distributed information about enrichment programs for GPS students. This year the C/E Committee began a Google Docs form for the shared distribution of programming information. As the year progressed and shared programs became a topic of much consideration, the need for this became more apparent and necessary.

#### GPS ASSURED EXPERIENCES

The Curriculum Enrichment Committee sought to cultivate a relationship with district and community leaders to consider what currently constitutes GPS “Assured Experiences,” as well as how the "Assured Experiences" programs may look in the future. This topic, always an important one, has come to the forefront of this committee and has been identified as a topic to focus more intently upon next year, 2021-22.

## **Digital Learning Committee**

The DL Committee shifted its focus a bit this year. While screen time and monitoring remains a parent concern, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for strong internet connectivity, increased student issued device capability (6-12) and parent concerns wanted to maintain our support for district administrators. We met with Michael Ting multiple times over the course of the year learning about and supporting initiatives including server room relocation,

We started the year with meetings and working with district administrators. Similar to other committees, much of our work was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. After three months of Distance Learning and the potential for additional Distance Learning in the 2020-21 school year, we believe that a parent committee remains essential to continue to advocate for concerns and questions related to digital technology in the district. Parents continue to have concerns related to screen time and monitoring, measuring effectiveness of various software programs on student performance, and how to best support our students at home.

## **Special Education Support Committee**

This year the Special Education Support (SES) Committee worked together with the Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) department and parents across the district to better understand and enhance special education programs. The SES committee had a productive year that resulted in the following accomplishments:

### **Summer Meetings and Reopening Discussions**

Starting in July of 2020, the SES committee attended weekly focus groups with the PPS department leading up to school re-opening. The SES committee closely reviewed special education re-opening plans and offered questions, insight and input to the PPS department. This dedicated effort strengthened communication and relationships between the SES community, parents, the PPS department and district administrators. This effort also resulted in effective advocacy for the special education community during a very uncertain time.

### **Regular Meetings**

Once school started, monthly meetings were held until December; after which, meetings were held bimonthly.

At regular meetings, SES representatives met with SES co-chairs virtually for round-table discussions. Representatives served a critical role in special education communication throughout the district. Representatives provided feedback from their schools and sought to clarify any outstanding questions. After round-table discussions, SES co-chairs and representatives met with the Chief PPS Officer and special education coordinators to share feedback and collaborate on special education initiatives. The SES committee also remained actively engaged in evolving education plans due to COVID19.

### **Parent Coffees**

At the beginning of the school year SES representatives held parent coffees. This outreach established and strengthened the special education community as representatives offered support regarding the special education process.

### **Special Education Remote Learning Survey**

In September 2020, the SES committee helped create a survey that went out to all special education families in the district. The survey was sent to parents/guardians of students who received special education and related services during the school closure related to the pandemic during the spring of 2020. The survey addressed distance learning and sought to target areas of success as well as areas that needed increased focus and improvement going forward. Valuable data was generated to help the district improve special education in a remote environment.

### Special Education Newsletter

With the ever-evolving re-opening plans, the SES committee advocated for more efficient communication on a district-wide level in the form of a biweekly special education newsletter. The SES committee worked together with the PPS department to form the first ever “PPS and Special Education Updates” newsletter. The newsletter is published every two weeks and includes special education updates, events, and opportunities.

### Special Education Review Steering Committee

Additionally, some SES members participated in the Special Education Review Steering Committee. This committee, which also included Dr. Jones as well as two Board of Education members, oversaw the selection of the firm conducting the review, Public Consulting Group (PCG). The Steering Committee members met with PCG several times and offered input and insight.

### Workshops

In January of 2021, the SES Committee and PPS department held an “IEP Basics” workshop. In an effort to make the IEP document easier to decipher, a series of short videos was created to explain the different pages in the IEP. The workshop was designed to provide a basic understanding of the information that is included on each page of an IEP. SES committee members worked with one of the district’s special education teachers, Lisa Berluti, to bring two virtual sessions to district parents/guardians. The videos are featured on the Special Education/PPS web page.

In May and June of 2021, the SES committee worked together with the PPS department to bring renowned child psychologist, Dr. Ross Greene, to work with parents in the district on his Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) model. Dr. Greene held a four-part webinar series in the Spring that included interactive opportunities. The virtual sessions were recorded and are featured on the PTAC web page.

### Final Thoughts

As the year comes to a close, the SES committee would like to thank all of the PTAC, BOE, GPS Staff and community members who supported the special education community throughout the year.

## **Twice Exceptional Committee**

Twice Exceptional (2E) refers to students who are both advanced or “gifted” and have a learning disability/difference (SES).

### 2E Highlights/Accomplishments:

- Hosted Three Parent Roundtables
  - The PTAC 2E Committee Roundtable provides an opportunity for parents/guardians to share information and resources to help each child realize his/her fullest potential.
  - The first roundtable was via Zoom with Guest Speakers, Matt Harrigan, Carolyn Borcharding, and Karen Vitti of Greenwich Public Schools, PPS department. ● The second roundtable was via Zoom with Guest Speaker Bonnie O'Regan, Greenwich Public Schools ALP coordinator to discuss the ALP testing and classroom changes for the 2021-22 school year, and how it will affect the 2E community.
  - The third roundtable was held in person outside, as the first two were not private enough for real parent discussions regarding specific children. We thought it would be nice to have an opportunity to have one session for parents to help each other navigate through the world of 2E.
- Hosted two 2E representative meetings via Zoom to discuss the best way for our school representatives to work with their parents of 2E students.
- Emailed the 2E parent email list, throughout the school year, information, and local/virtual programs that would be relevant and interesting to our constituents.
- Worked with the school representatives on the best way to educate the GPS community on what is a 2E child.
- Worked closely with several committees including the Greenwich Special Ed Advisory Council (SEAC), as well as the special ed steering committee (managed by PCG) to ensure the 2E population was represented and included in the needed changes to Greenwich Special Education.
- Continued to work with ALP and SES to email information and gather important responses from our constituents for relevant feedback. We look forward to being able to work more closely with these groups in the future.
- Continued and updated a list of “parent recommended” resources from our 2E Parent Roundtables to use as a source for parents.
- Continued and updated the Operation and Transition manuals for future 2E chairs.

### **Special Committee - Remote Schools**

Remote School Special Committee consisted of one representative proposed by each of the fifteen Constituent Associations and approved by the Board of Directors, with two co-chairs to be appointed by the Board of Directors with advice from involved parties. The Special Committee focused on representing and advocating for the unique needs and concerns of the students and parents/guardians of the Remote School. The Special Committee had a term of the school year 2020-2021, subject to renewal by a subsequent Board of Directors. The Special Committee co-Chairs will report to the Student Support Vice President of the Board of Directors.

#### **2021 - 2021 Special Committee**

VP of Student Support - Kathy Walker Co-Chair - Frances Wu Nobay Co-Chair - Bob Chaney  GHS - Katie Yu  CMS - RJ Becker EMS - Karen Weissler WMS - Nancy Lu	Cos Cob - Dani Rossi Glenville - Lisa Moses Hamilton Ave - Jennifer Frimere ISD - Mary Desmond Julian Curtiss - Bob Chaney New Lebanon - Susie Ponce North Mianus - Sophie Cao NSS - Grace Natale Old Greenwich - Helen Zhang / Michelle Horgan Parkway - Lisa Small Riverside - Emily Brown
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In addition, Remote Schools recruited:

- more than 40 class parent volunteers to support the 30 sections of GRLS Grade K - 5 elementary school
- ten multilingual class parents to help volunteers support families where English was not shared

To stay connected, the Remote Schools:

- Sent a weekly Monday email to all volunteers
- Hosted monthly virtual meetings with all volunteers, with meeting slides and meeting minutes. Three of the meetings include guest speakers which were recorded and posted to PTAC resources - Dr. Elliott on EdTech and Dr. Boie on Mental Health
- January and May virtual meetings with GPS' Dr. Jones, Mr. D'Amico, his team and all remote learning parents. Grade K - 8 parents were especially invited. Notes were sent to all who registered
- Spoke monthly at the Greenwich Board of Education to keep remote learners top of mind
- Ad-hoc, there was also a session specifically on curriculum enrichment and how to navigate neighborhood school activities versus remote school activities

- Ad-hoc, we had twelve coordination meetings with Mr. D'Amico and his team
- Ad-hoc coordination with Academic Excellence Committee, PTAC Curriculum Enrichment Committee, Digital Learning Committee and informally with the Greenwich Remote Schools Facebook group.

In addition, for GRLS Grade K - 5 in particular, the Remote Schools provided virtual:

- Curriculum Enrichment January - May led by parent volunteers Aneela Ahmad and Emily Brown in coordination with GPS staff Jacqueline Carlin and Anthony Stempien. [View program details \(link\)](#) The virtual assemblies were funded by the Greenwich Alliance for Education at a total cost of \$4585. The Grade 5 virtual field trip to Philadelphia was funded by the International School of Dundee Principal's fund at a cost of \$565.
- Spirit Week March 22 - 26 led by parent volunteer Jana McQueen
- Teacher Appreciation Week May 3 - 7 led by parent volunteer Dani Rossi fueled by nearly \$1000 in donations
- Year-End Dance Party June 18 led by parent volunteer Jana McQueen

Ad-hoc, neighborhood school reps and class parent volunteers:

- Updated neighborhood school directories and lists to identify remote school families and stay in touch
- Sent out surveys to poll and get feedback on the remote school experience
- Coordinated virtual and in-person playdates
- Hosted virtual mystery guests and book reads

The Remote School committee worked through following issues:

- Getting regular district-wide and school-specific remote learner counts

	8/20 BOE	9/17 BOE	10/22 BOE	3/25 Family Note	5/7 Comment
Elementary	694	635	517	439	364
Middle	407	392	392	1348	
High	444	434	434		
	<b>1545</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>1343</b>	<b>1787</b>	

- Virtual Reading Champions
- Promoting GRLS social worker Philip Rice and Math Interventionist ANnie Wilson
- Oversized classes, especially ALP
- Better FLES and updated grading of art/music
- Supplies, including keyboards, math manipulatives and paper/pencils for needy students
- Virtual Social Club for mental health support for our GrK - 12 remote students. Grade K - 5 sessions got more than 40 students attending!

- Class Gift Guidance and My Favorite Things Form for GRLS Grade K - 5 class parent volunteers
- Better Grade 2 ALP with an asynchronous video lesson and grading of assignments
- Reinforcement of the use of Google Classroom Summaries
- Virtual Afters enrichment - Middle School Readiness Workshop for remote school grade 5 students
- Supported Grade 2 video issue
- Supported GRLS Grade K - 5 teacher changes

We escalated and highlighted:

- Difference in GRLS Grade K - 5 early release timing
- Secondary school Zoom fatigue
- Lack of substitutes
- Google Chromebook performance issues
- Google Meet issues, including lack of Waiting Room functionality

Overall, the Remote Schools Special Committee served as a critical advocacy and communication touchpoint for the remote learning families.



## **Special Committee - Student Activities**

### **Middle Schools**

The committee met with the middle school principals to discuss enhanced communication and transparency between schools and parents. All principals discussed their weekly efforts to provide parents with information, but found that parents didn't read the emails. They are able to track who opens their emails and the numbers are very low. The principals suggested we work with the PTA Presidents to come up with more ways to drive parents to the websites where there is plenty of information which is updated in almost real time. The committee is in the process of helping with that effort.

### **Transition from 8th to 9th grade**

After discussing this issue with the middle school principals and Gus Lindine, both sides are working to communicate information before the end of the school year so that parents can plan around try-out dates and preseason for Fall sports. Again, the main issue is not content or communication. The problem lies with the parents actually reading communications from middle schools and PTAs. We are suggesting all schools try and retrain parents to utilize the websites since they are generally very content rich.

### **GHS**

The committee met with Gus Lindine and Laura Jean Waters, GHS Media Specialist and Webmaster. When discussing the communication issues, we were pleasantly surprised to hear about the efforts currently going on to bridge the gap. GHS is working on introducing new communication platforms such as the Remind app, but there are so many hurdles. The uneven communication between sports is due to some coaches being more email savvy or even introducing their own communications app. The Athletic Department has been working on transitioning their current platform of League Athletics to Final Site. This should be up and running after Jan 1, 2022 and provide a better overall athletic website.

For next year, the committee is planning on following up with middle school PTAs to see if there is progress getting parents to use their school websites as their go-to for information. For GHS, the committee will be focusing on the Athletic Department, as well as on other extra-curricular activities such as the music or theater departments, and on clubs.

# School PTA Accomplishments

## Cos Cob School

### **Curriculum Enrichment and Supplementation:**

- Kindergarten: Critter Caravan
- Grade 1: Critter Caravan, Museum of Natural History Virtual Field Trip (Animal Adaptations)
- Grade 2: Animal Embassy, Museum of Natural History Virtual Field Trip (Animal Adaptations)
- Grade 3: Eli Whitney Virtual Field Trip, Journey to Indian Territories Experience, National Museum of Natural History Virtual Experience: Insect Survival
- Grade 4: Dr. Kaboom: Newton's Law, Three Soundwaters Virtual Field Trips - Coastal Field Study, On Board the Schooner, On Board the Soundwater Research Vessel
- Grade 5: Trophy for the Battle of the Books winning team, Boston Tea Party Virtual Experience, Bronx Zoo Virtual Field Trip, Prizes & Pizza Lunch for Math Enrichment Program Participants,

### **All School Events:**

Stem Magician: Mario the Magician  
National Double Dutch League Performance  
K-2 Fauji Sing Author Visit

### **Staff, Family, and Community Engagement**

- Virtual Book Fair
- Twinkle Tour
- Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt
- Teacher Appreciation Week (Gift, breakfast, & lunches)
- Flowers for families that are leaving CCS, given at 5th grade graduation
- Life Events Fund for teachers and families
- Virtual PTA Meetings
- Support for PTAC Scholarships
- Scholarships for GHS graduates
- Virtual Afters
- School Directory
- Spirit Wear & Gift Bag for incoming Kindergarteners
- Support for Distinguished Teacher Awards
- Membership Toolkit
- Cherry Dale Fundraiser
- Family Photos in the Park Fundraiser
- Holiday Breakfast for all Staff
- Back to School Breakfast and treats for Staff

### **Facilities**

- Cleaning of the Media Center Fish Tank
- Bottle Filling Fountain Filters
- Field Day Ribbons
- Plastic Cups to use in Music Class
- Two Water Coolers for No-Touch Water Bottle Refills
- Door Stoppers
- Tape to mark the floor throughout the school
- Bags for all students to carry their masks in

## **Glenville School**

### **Curriculum Enrichment**

#### **Assemblies & Workshops**

- Simran Jeet Sinjh - virtual author visit for grades 3 and 4
- Bash the Trash - Sustaining Sounds virtual program K to 2
- Little Red Hen (Ridgefield Playhouse) - virtual play for K
- Maritime Center - Structures and Functions virtual program - 1st grade
- Bronx Zoo - Animal Diversity and Adaptations virtual program - 1st grade
- Virtual Tour - Greenwich Monuments by Greenwich Historical Society - 2nd grade
- Bronx Zoo virtual Tour - Wildlife superhero's - 3rd grade
- Tod's Point - June - 5th grade end of year celebration

#### **Subscriptions (Paper & Digital) for Teachers**

- Scholastic Magazines (Grades K-3, 5)
- Time for Kids (Grade 4 & ESL)
- Greg Tang Math Worksheets (Grades K-5)

### **Family and Community Engagement**

#### **Community Building Endeavors**

- Back-To-School Events
  - Welcome signs for Incoming Kindergarteners
  - Welcome Back Teacher Lunch
  - Stop for a Pop drive thru
  - Welcome Back Parent Coffee truck
- Fifth Grade Community Service Council support (teacher stipend)
- Fifth Grade Dance
- Fifth Grade Graduation snacks & decorations
- Field Day ice cream truck
- Ben's Bells presentation
- Kind Campus Committee support
- Sunshine Club (teacher morale booster club) support
- Life Events funds for teachers
- Teacher Appreciation Week (swag purchase and food trucks for the week)
- PTA Meetings (zoom calls due to covid)
- Food provided for staff meetings and professional development days
- Offer Gator Gear school spirit wear for purchase
- Monthly water service for the staff breakroom
- Support for student birthday photo with Principal and birthday cards
- Scholarships for GHS graduates who attended Glenville School
- Support for PTAC Scholarships
- Support for Distinguished Teacher Awards
- Support for staff holiday breakfast
- Provide free field day t-shirts for all students

- Family Events

- Family Outdoor Drive-In Movie Night & Gator Give Back
- Gator Glow
- Holiday Cookie Decorating Kit

- Newsletters and Communications

- Weekly PTA Newsletter: The Gator Bytes
- School Directory: Online (web and app) & print
- PTA Website featuring online school directory, calendar feed, parent resources & info
- PTA App featuring access to school directory, calendar, and communications

- Parent-Only Events

- Mixology
- Parents Night Out

## **Facilities**

### Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment

- Outdoor games to help with social distancing

### School Beautification

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Vegetable & Flower Garden
- Spray Painted games on blacktop (4square, hopscotch, basketball court)



## **FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The HAS PTA Board of Directors determined that developing programs to keep our Hamilton Avenue community engaged through the pandemic was a top priority this year. Key concentrations for our PTA meeting programs included: 1) providing our families with information that would allow them to be better able to partner with the school to support their child's academic progress especially in a year where in person events were not permitted, and 2) providing parents and children virtual opportunities to build community among our HAS families.

- **Communications** = We developed ways to build an optimal level of communication in spite of being limited in the ways in which we could communicate with our families this year. We continued our partnership with HAS administration to contribute to weekly newsletters via Smore in order to get information about PTA events to our parent community.
- We continued to utilize the digital platform Membership Toolkit to enhance our Membership process and through this program we were able to set up online payment of events happening during the year (e.g.-cookie decorating fundraiser; mask fundraiser) to allow for "cashless" payments during the pandemic.
- HAS PTA volunteers launched a Hamilton Avenue School Facebook and Instagram page in order to increase communication with parents through social media. With limited ways to reach our parent community this year, social media allowed us another platform to communicate with parents and get information to them about events, PTA meetings, BOE meetings, etc.
- We designated a position on our board of directors to our parent Remote School Representative in order to keep our Remote School families updated on all Hamilton Avenue PTA events and information as well as to provide a direct link to the school community to continue to keep our Remote School families engaged in our Hamilton Avenue community.
- **Community Partnership** = After putting our partnership with Bruce Museum on hold in the Spring of 2020 due to the pandemic we resumed our work with Bruce Museum. We planned a family night with Bruce Museum which was held in January 2021 with our representative from Bruce Museum who provided a family friendly workshop related to exhibits at the museum. We also supported our administration by providing information to coordinate virtual field trips for students which were hosted by Bruce Museum. We are hoping to get back to in-person events with

Bruce Museum during the 2021-2022 school year.

- At the request of the Boys and Girls Club we invited a representative to our April PTA meeting to speak to parents regarding the programs they offer for students.  
HAS PTA president reached out to the Boys and Girls Club after that meeting to determine ways that we can work together to support our students and families in the future.
- At the holiday time, we continued our tradition to take up a collection in order to provide a gift to our two crossing guards who are at their posts every day to safely walk our children across the street to school.
- **Social Emotional Learning** = During our March 2021 PTA meeting, we invited our school social worker and school psychologist to provide a presentation to our parent community about Building Resiliency. We felt this topic was especially helpful to parents as we came close to being one year since school closed due to the pandemic and many families were still struggling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Literacy** = We held our Book Fair virtually and during the November PTA meeting we kicked off our book fair with a presentation from one of our literacy specialists about selecting books to enhance your child's reading diet.
- **Health & Wellness** = We were unable to resume our efforts toward building health and wellness within our community due to the limited outdoor space that was available to us this year due to the ongoing field project. We did not have an outdoor alternative to host events such as Zumba which was beginning to become a regular event a few times per year for HAS. We look forward to resuming our efforts to host more of our health and wellness events in the 2021-2022 school year.
- **Virtual Presence** = HAS PTA provided all formal PTA meetings via Zoom during the 2020-2021 school year to continue our efforts as a PTA to get information to parents and to connect parents with administration, staff and other parents in order to continue to build family engagement and community.
- HAS PTA increased our social media presences by starting our Hamilton Avenue School PTA Facebook and Instagram pages. Since we were limited in the ways in which we could get information to parents this year, we developed the social media pages in order to get more information to parents and give them a forum on social media to comment and ask questions to the PTA.
- HAS PTA held many new virtual events for families many of which parents were able to participate in with their children with no cost to them. We held a virtual pumpkin carving contest, family drawing night with an illustrator from the Galaxy Jack book series, family night with the Bruce Museum, etc.
- HAS PTA was able to pivot to a virtual format for many of our annual (and a few new ones) fundraisers (e.g.-Fall Fundraiser; Fall Book Fair; School

Photos; Fun Run; Cookie Decorating Fundraiser; Mask Fundraiser, etc.) and events that we could still offer families some of their favorite events even though we could not be in the building to enjoy them in person.

- **Spiritwear** = HAS PTA added a HAM AVE strong face mask to our inventory given the COVID-19 requirements for face masks to be worn by students and staff during the school day.
- HAS PTA provided a HAS spiritwear t-shirt and book to all incoming Kindergarten students.
- With the help of administration, the students at Ham Ave voted on a Husky to be our new mascot. The HAS PTA researched and purchased the husky image for the school to use on student planners for the 2021-2022 school year and we plan to roll out a new line of spiritwear in the Fall of 2021 with our new Husky mascot.

Although our attendance has been low during the second half of the school year, we continued to offer PTA meetings on Zoom with a speaker and a topic each month. We look forward to increasing our attendance again at in-person meetings next year where we will resume providing babysitting services during the meeting. Additionally, we continue to have difficulty securing a translator at our meetings but we continue to publicize the need for translators in our weekly headlines and at every PTA meeting.

### **CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT**

The PTA continues to utilize scholastic dollars earned through our book fair to provide free books to students as well as a set amount for teacher PTA members to spend on books for their classrooms. The PTA is also working with one of our literacy specialists to purchase books through scholastic based on the needs of the students at Ham Ave. We continue to provide funding through PTAC/GSA to extend need and merit-based scholarships to graduating GHS students who were HAS students in elementary school. Although there were no in-person field trips this year due to COVID-19, the PTA organized a virtual offering of our annual Day in Clay. The PTA also reinstated our relationship with Bruce Museum and connected Bruce Museum staff with HAS administration in order to provide choices of a number of virtual field trips during the school year.

### **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

The PTA provided parents with a workshop on Building Resiliency at our March 2021 PTA meeting which was presented by school mental health staff (school psychologist & school social worker) in order to support the social emotional needs of our students and families. The PTA also organized virtual offerings and as many no cost activities as possible throughout the year so that parents could attend events with their children in a fun, family friendly virtual setting. The PTA attempted to take some of the stress out of school supply shopping especially for parents who were still hesitant to shop in person by working with teacherlists.com for one stop online shopping for school supplies from our supply



list.

## **FACILITIES**

The HAS PTA continued to advocate for the completion of our field project by attending BOE meetings and reaching out to the school district and town officials as necessary in order to obtain updates on the completion in order to update our parent community. Without any access to the building this year for PTA volunteers, our efforts toward facilities were minimal; however we look forward to being back on school grounds and

helping wherever it is needed in the future. Our PTA shed, which houses a lot of our materials, is in need of organizing and prior to the pandemic a plan was being discussed for fixing up the shed. That project will be revisited as soon as we are able to be back on school grounds to work on it.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

We are looking forward to the 2021-2022 school year with the goal of furthering our work of building strong family engagement in education at Hamilton Avenue. We would like to put some effort into building up membership by offering some membership incentives (e.g.-discounted entry into PTA events for PTA members, etc.) and increase our pool of PTA volunteers. Increasing the number of volunteers we have on the PTA will be one of our number one priorities for next year. Due to no in-person events this year, HAS PTA held off on events that were in the planning phases during the 2019-2020 school year when school closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our PTA looks forward to resuming planning for those events (e.g.-Spaghetti Dinner, etc.) once in person events are permitted. Most of all, we look forward to in-person events for our HAS families to come together to build community and family engagement between home and school.



### **Curriculum Enrichment**

- Back to School Assembly: featured live outdoor performances by the National Double Dutch Team; students learned the history of Double Dutch and were wowed by their athletic talent and coordination. The PTA purchased jump ropes for all classrooms to use at recess. The event was recorded to share with remote learners.
- Science month spanned January and February. There were weekly virtual visits from The Bruce Museum and The Liberty Science Center
- Mad Science Virtual Spook-Tacular Halloween performance in October. (ISD remote learners included)
- Virtual author visits: Dan Bar-el (author of our One School One Book, Book, November), Don Tate (Author/Illustrator, December), Victoria J. Coe (March), Kenn Nesbitt (Poet, April). Books from all authors were purchased for each classroom and the media center! Note: Dan Bar-el did a separate virtual presentation for ISD remote learners (November)
- Writer in Residence Victoria J. Coe provided 5 part webinars series for grades 2-5 with on virtually live Q&A session (March)
  - Virtual Math Night – PTA sponsored evening event with Brian Richards, Magical Math. The PTA created bags with a deck of cards and math games instructions for each family (including remote) (April)
  - Classical Café – monthly virtual lunchtime musical performances for all grades with notable performers including; a steel drum duo, trumpet player, a professional acapella group, a sitar player. We had one live performance by a staff member who is a professional violinist. Although the performances were virtual, the recordings were custom made including questions from ISD students and responses filmed by the musicians. It provided a very real feel.
  - Year End Assembly: live performances featuring Li Liu a professional Chinese Acrobat (June)
  - The ISD PTA proudly supports the International Baccalaureate Cultural Partnerships which included financial support for the following programs this year:
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – Stamford Nature Center

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Journeys into American Indian Territory (Virtual)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade – Guggenheim Museum and Sound Waters
- Financial support for the Fifth Grade Exhibition production
- Purchased One School One Book for each ISD Family for summer reading • Purchased two graduation books for all 5th graders • Developed a relationship with Diane's Books and gave each ISD student a \$20 book voucher to make their own book selections for summer reading.

### **Social and Emotional Learning**

*There is a large Social and Emotional Learning component embedded within the IB framework at ISD. The IB Learner Profiles teach the students the value and the skills of being open-minded, caring, balanced, being a risk-taker, being a communicator, complemented with other character traits.*

In the 2020-2021 school year, the ISD PTA also supported Social and Emotional Learning through a range of activities and events for the children and families, including: • Birthday T-shirts gifted to each student on their birthday, which are decorated and signed by their classmates • ISD Spirit Wear • ISD PTA hosted our first ever Dance A Thon as this year's school wide fundraiser. Students watched daily videos about movement and character development. The event culminated with a fun socially distanced dance party during gym classes to fun music, music videos and festive lighting!

### **Family and Community Engagement**

- ISD PTA tried it's best to continue the tradition of hosting family events to bring the community together and build social connections for the magnet school population. All of our events had to be modified due to the pandemic, we worked hard to still stay connected.
  - ISD PTA board attended Kindergarten and New Families visitation outdoors to welcome all the new families.
  - Welcome Back to School (September): The PTA made the first day drop off very festive. We had our mascot Sparky, our inflatable wiggle men up and doing their thing, we worked with the teachers to decorate chalk messages on all walkways.
  - The ISD PTA board rented the Tod's Point ClamBake area and hosted 2 outdoor Meet and Greets. (September)
  - The ISD PTA Board hosted a Virtual Meet and Greet and Welcome for all parents in the evening. (September)
  - 20th Year Anniversary Cookbooks and Aprons created and

sold; recipes contributed by ISD families and staff.

- Virtual Color Challenge (October): Families registered, got their color packs and goodies, ran with their families getting exercise and fun. This was a modified version of our traditional fall fundraiser which is usually a much larger community event. We still had 217 participants!
- Jack O'Lantern Drivethru (October), families donated over 120 carved pumpkins which were illuminated and displayed along our drive-thru circle along with our traditional Monster Mash decorations. Families drove their cars through and children received a small bag of candies at the end! The next day all remaining pumpkins were collected and disposed of in a green manner.
- Virtual Talent Show (March), We had over 30 students submit performances which covered never before events such as; dog whisperer, venus fly trap demonstration, pull ups, trampoline acts, skateboarding, rubix cube solving along with the traditional acts of singing, dancing, magicians, pianists and gymnastic feats! We had our 5th graders MC the event which was all prerecorded. Over 145 viewers tuned in.
- ISD Beach Picnic (June) The PTA reserved the ClamBake area at Tod's Point. Families brought their own food and drink. The PTA hired an ice cream truck for the children. Spirit Wear items were sold. It was our first time coming together as a community, even though it was staggered by grades.

- The PTA hosted a Virtual Wine Tasting and Trivia Night as this year's Parent Social
- The Afters Committee organized 3 Virtual sessions (Fall, Winter, Spring) of after school programs for ISD students to explore their various interests.
- Hosted a Virtual Book Fair with Follett Books (November). Our Book Fair Committee coordinated two book topics with a virtual teacher read aloud and collaborated with two local restaurants where a portion of their proceeds were given back to our PTA from meals ordered those evenings.
- ISD Photo Day
- Continued providing ISDPTA.ORG website – allowing access for all PTA members to ISD activities, events, directories, forms, purchases etc.
- Weekly electronic Dragon Tales newsletter is sent to every parent to keep them informed of ISD and district information and events
- ISD PTA online directory available to all families who joined the PTA as well as an option to purchase a physical directory

- Buddy Families - Families new to ISD are paired with seasoned ISD families to welcome and assist them with questions related to the school, starting in September.
- Financial support for scholarship awards to GHS students and the Distinguished Teacher Awards.
- PTA working with teachers for families to purchase School Supplies
- Managed school lost and found (June)
- Host Virtual 5th Grade Transition Meeting (June)

### **Facilities & Purchases:**

- Purchased two and installed three new picnic benches to enhance outdoor learning environment
- Purchased outdoor seating cushions for every student to make outdoor learning more comfortable
- Purchased stylus pens for all ISD students, including remote learners to help with Ipad use
- Purchased waist belts/fanny packs for all in-school students for a place to safely store face masks while on mask breaks
- Purchased physical items to support technology and learning; one double sided white board on wheels, 4 portable cameras , 100 pairs of earbuds and replacement TV for the school hallway
- Supported one ISD teacher in attending a Greg Tang Education Workshop
- Awarded 3 Teacher Grants to fund instructional innovations in the classrooms; music and the Learning Commons / Media Center as well as an outdoor sensory path
- Purchased indoor and outdoor recess games and equipment for approximately half of the classrooms
- School beautification committee provides fresh plantings of flowers and seasonal plants to enhance the school appearance, particularly around the first day of school and holidays
- The Green Schools Committee provided an Earth Week full of awareness. The committee wrote up daily e-blasts educating families on a range of environment topics, a used battery drive was held collecting over 200lbs of batteries and 150 plant sprouts were gifted to students on Earth Day at dismissal.
- Holiday Cookie Boxes purchased for all teachers and staff during the December Parent/Teacher Conferences. Usually our parents make cookies and prepare the boxes but because of the pandemic we decided to use a local bakery.
- Amazon Gift Cards presented to all certified teaching staff on

the first day of school to assist with supplemental classroom purchases

- Gift cards presented to all non-instructional staff members in December
- Monthly Teacher Appreciation provided in the form of a breakfast or lunch food truck. This was new this year and done to flow our teachers extra support during this very difficult year
- Teacher Appreciation Week: One breakfast, two lunches, customized chocolates and a baseball cap provided throughout the week to celebrate all ISD teachers and staff!
- Purchased a set of rods to hang our International Country Flags. These flags truly represent the “International” nature of ISD and help raise the students’ awareness and appreciation of their heritages and their connections to the world.
- PTA supplied ice pops for all students on Field Day
- PTA hired year end Ice Cream truck for each class to enjoy their year end ice cream parties sponsored by the PTA (June)

## **Julian Curtiss School**

### Curriculum Enrichment

- PTA hosted many Zoom author visits this year.
  - Nov- Simran Author visit for all grades
  - Dec- Jline dance school event for all grades
  - Feb- Victoria Jamieson Author visit for grades 3-5, Bronx Zoo Virtual for grades K-2
  - May- Dave Roman/Astronaut Academy for grades 2-5
  - June- Bash the Trash for grades K-5

### Social and Emotional Learning

- General PTA meetings that focused on topics that follow the district norms.
- PTA provides a weekly newsletter and email reminders so that children and parents are constantly informed of all the happenings at JC

### Family and Community Engagement

- Family Fun Night- Socially distant gathering for JC families to kick off the school year. Provided food trucks, music, spirit wear, pumpkins sold.
- PTA organized a Scholastic Book Fair Virtually. We were able to still have children “shop” virtually through the Scholastic program.
- UN Day- Due to COVID, we were unable to have our traditional celebrations and parade, but still made the week happen. The flags were standing outside the school grounds for the week. Morning drop off music was played as students arrived at school.
- PTA organized Teacher appreciation week- each day the PTA helped to recognize teachers and staff with different events.
  - Monday- All Day Long emails to teachers and thank them for all they do
  - Tuesday- Breakfast for Staff- PTA Executive Board provides breakfast
  - Wednesday- Come to school with a flower for your teacher- PTA provided vases for all teachers to collect beautiful flowers
  - Thursday- Individual Bag of Treats for each teacher
  - Friday- Staff Luncheon
- PTA organizes a Yearbook
- Kindergarten Orientation- Prior to the first day of school, The PTA helps welcome the new students and families. COVID safety only Co-Presidents attended and set up spirit wear to sell to the parents and speak to parents outside while students visited in classroom.
- Continued with an annual scholarship in MaryAnn Murray’s name, who retired from the district after 40+ years. A graduating 5th grader, who fills certain criterias created by MaryAnn, will receive \$250 Staples gift card to help them prepare for middle school.
- What’s Cooking?- JC community event virtual this year. PTA paired with Chef Jessica on a family virtual cooking event.

- End of the Year Social at the Bowman Observatory on JC grounds- PTA held a fundraising event to end the school year and celebrate a successful year.
- The PTA organizes Photo Day
- The PTA recognizes Principal's day, Nurses' Day and Administrative Asst Day and provides those staff members with a few gifts of thanks.
- JC Winter Wonderland Drive Thru- PTA created a Holiday drive thru for cars around the front circle of the school. Students were encouraged to create a winter scene to be displayed along the Winter Wonderland Village. Created a contest of 5 different themes. Each winner received an Amazon gift card.
- Great Pumpkin Light Up- PTA created a Halloween drive thru for cars around the front circle of the school. Students were encouraged to create Halloween theme pumpkins. Lights decorated around to light up the path. PTA handed out individual candy bags to each car as they drove through. Created a contest of different themes. Each winner received an Amazon gift card.
- Penny Wars- PTA created a school wide outside Penny Wars! Each grade had a water jug to fill for one week. Each penny counts as one positive point for each grade. Silver coins count as negative points (ex, dropping a quarter in another grades jug takes points away from the final count). At the end of week the grade with the most points wins a pizza party.
- JC Discount Card- PTA created a "JC Discount Card" for the community to purchase. Cards include a list of local restaurants and sores with specific discounts on the back.
- Wellness Week- Back to School week of wellness. PTA provided community emails with the days tips and goals, students will participate in daily wellness activities at school to promote a healthy mind, body and spirit.
  - Move It Monday
  - Tech Health Tuesday
  - W-W-W Wednesday
  - Thoughtful Thursday
  - Friendly Friday
- Spring Boosterthon Program- March 30th kicked off a fundraising event that ended on April 8th. Students raised money on line and participated in daily events both in school and nightly at home. The students raised towards goals to earn rewards.

#### Facilities

- The PTA has a School beautification Rep who helps to keep the front flowers/plants healthy
- The PTA gives every teacher a stipend at the beginning of the year to help them buy supplies for their classrooms.
- PTA provided additional books for classrooms and media center
- PE equipment- PTA provided additional PE equipment to help adhere to the COVID guidelines



## NEW LEBANON SCHOOL

### CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT

#### SCHOOLWIDE

- Bash the Trash, an ensemble that uses musical instruments built from recycled trash to teach about science, sound and the environment, and their Latin American cultures from which they came. performed school wide assemblies for all of the students.
- New York Times bestselling author Simran Singh gave a school wide assembly and reading of his book: Fauja Singh Keeps Going. Students were also able to pre purchase his book at a discounted rate and some were donated to families in need.
- JLine Dance Anti Bullying Campaign
- High Touch High Tech Science enrichment programs (all grades)
- Li Liu | Chinese Acrobat outdoor assembly

#### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- NL 5th grade Food Drive
- Farm to Byram Garden Project (3rd grade)
- Teacher classroom set up funds
- Book fair donates books to all the classrooms and Learning Commons
- Hosted Back to school luncheon for teachers
- Ice Pops for First Day of School
- Picture Day
- PTA meetings
- Fall & Spring Book Fair
- Eggstravaganza Spring Egg Hunt
- Pumpkin Decorating Contest
- Valentine's Day Cookie Decorating
- Field Day Bandanas and Popcorn machine
- Festival of Trees Winter Drive Through
- Teacher Appreciation Week

- Annual Class Basket Raffle
- 5th Grade Boundless Adventures (end of year trip)
- 5th Grade Car Wash

## ONGOING INITIATIVES

- Patti Jomo | Family Engagement
- Ongoing DUEL LANGUAGE PTA meetings
- Class Parent Support
- Creation of online directory and management system (Toolkit)
- Box Tops For Education
- Stop & Shop Rewards
- First Day School Supplies
- Assisted Families in need
- Board of Ed Meetings
- Spirit Wear
- Green Schools – Walk/Bike to School days, Recycling and Composting Pilot, Rainwater Garden
- PTA Website Maintenance
- Constant Contacts
- Scholarship Donations – Book Awards, Distinguished Teacher, PTAC

## **North Mianus School**

### ***Curriculum Enrichment***

*Our Curriculum enrichment, both grade specific and all-school, differed from years past to abide by Covid-19 restrictions.*

Schoolwide:

- Art sessions with the Bruce Museum - virtual and purchasing yarn and modeling clay
- PE outdoor supplies
- Music African drumming session with Arts for Learning Connecticut-virtual

Kindergarten:

- Bronx Zoo in March - virtual
- Rocky Mountain National Park in April - virtual
- HTHT Scientifically Science in April - virtual
- HTHT Weather Wizards in May - virtual
- HTHT Newton in a Nutshell in June - virtual

First Grade:

- Stepping Stones in February - virtual
- Bronx Zoo in April - virtual

Second Grade:

- Bush Holley Museum in February - virtual
- CT Science Center in April - virtual
- HTHT Primarily Plants in May - virtual

Third Grade:

- CT Science Center Chem-Mystery in November - virtual
- Eli Whitney Museum Building a Whaling Ship in November - virtual
- Talewise Mummy Mansion in January - virtual
- Bush Holley House (Assured Experience) in May - virtual
- Beardsley Zoo Animal Adaptations in May - virtual

Fourth Grade:

- Eli Whitney Museum Pinball Machine in November - virtual
- Ridgefield Playhouse/Arts in Education Ellis Island performance in March - virtual
- Eli Whitney Museum Electromagnet in April - virtual
- Bronx Zoo Ecosystems and Habitats in May - virtual

Fifth Grade:

- CT Science Center Making Waves in November - virtual

- HTHT Climate Commando in February - virtual
- GHS Patriots vs. Loyalists in June - outdoor in-person
- Fairfield Museum Living History in June - outdoor in-person

### ***Social and Emotional Learning***

- December 3, 2020, NMS PTA welcomed school counselor Allison Tables and former special educator administrator Susan Chandler to provide parents with tips and strategies to help our elementary school students with executive functioning challenges.
- In January 2021, Open Arts' Maria's World returned to NMS virtually as part of our SEL program to help students talk about their feelings. Maria's World has integrated the Five Core Competencies of the GPS SEL curriculum to teach school-age children how to process their concerns and feelings for self and others. To meet the needs of the virtual world, Open Arts' teaching artist Maria Pizzarello created an interactive workshop on the subject of social awareness and relationship skills culminating in the creation of a learning community charter meant to guide students and teachers through this challenging interpersonal time.
- April 2021, Evelyn Bilius Lolis, PhD presented virtually to our NMS parenting community on the topics of pandemic parenting stress, the compassion fatigue that has emerged thereof, and practical strategies rooted in positive psychological science for promoting resilience and wellness in the home. The presentation followed with a dynamic and intimate conversation about the challenges presented above.

### ***Facilities***

- School Beautification
- Teacher classroom set up funds
- Installed new bike racks for increased ridership
- Purchased more picnic tables for mask breaks, outside learning and lunch.
- Book fair donated scholastic bucks to classrooms and Learning Common

### ***Family and Community Engagement***

- Communications
  - Weekly Newsletter from the PTA
  - Webpage maintained and expanded to share resources
  - Creation and Maintenance of Online Family Directory
  - PTA Website Maintenance
  - Constant Contacts with important information or resources
  - NMS Yearbook
  - Shared exciting happenings and weekly newsletter with GPS Administration and BOE
  - Families that didn't join the PTA were kept informed throughout the year via class parent communications.

- Events and Fundraisers
  - Welcome Back backpacks for all students
  - Photo Day team successfully organized a safe outdoor photo day for NMS
  - Family Photo Mini-Shoots
  - Fall and Spring Virtual Book Fairs
  - NMS Together Lawn Signs for all families after ceiling collapse
  - Parent Spring Trivia Night
  - Spirit Wear
  - Rebate Programs (Box Tops/Amazon Smile)
  - Eden Farm Fundraiser
  - 5th Grade Moving Up 'Celebration'
  - 5th Grade Beach Party
  - NMS Yearbook team coordinated with the Class parents to obtain candid photos from the NMS teachers to fill the 2020-2021 yearbook with memories of a unique year.
    - Including NMS students in the remote school
    - Including students who transferred back to in-person learning from remote
  
- PTA Meetings and Family Events
  - Ask the Administrator Fall
  - Ask the Administrator with Mrs. Schmidt, Dr. Jones and Dan Watson to address relocation and reconstruction
  - Class Zoom Coffees (one per class)
  - Bi-monthly PTA Meetings
  - Kindergarten Parents Welcome on Playground after supplies drop off
  - New Family Committee for Welcome Coffee and Yearlong Events
  - Executive Board appreciation gathering
  - Class Parent Support
  - Board of Ed Meetings Attendance
  
- Health and Wellness/Green Schools
  - Cell Phone, Sneaker, Battery and Crayola Recycling Programs
  - Green Schools – Walk/Bike to School days, Recycling and Composting Pilot, Composting, & Recycling
  - Supported the creation of a Pollinator's Garden
  
- Teacher Outreach and Support

- o Hosted Back to school luncheon for teachers
- o Fall Teacher Appreciation Day - students brought in cards / drawings for their teachers, some class parents prepared flowers and other gifts for their teachers too.
- o NMS Teacher and Staff Gratitude Day (after return to in-person post flood) - students brought in notes / cards and parents emailed teachers, staff, and administrators. Many classes chose to gift meals, food delivery gift cards, etc. to their teachers as well.
- o Birthday cards emailed to faculty and staff members throughout the school year
- o Teacher Appreciation Week
  - Partnered with CCS, OGS and PKY
  - Meals, gift cards
  - 5 days of student created thanks

## North Street School

### Curriculum Enrichment

- *Virtual Presentations and Field Trip*  
Simran Jeet Singh- (whole school)  
Ted Scheu, writer in residence- K, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Adam Gidwitz, writer in residence- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>  
Nonfiction Author Nancy Churnin- 4<sup>th</sup>  
Traveling Art – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>  
Bronx Zoo- K and 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Animal Embassy – K and 1<sup>st</sup>  
Journeys into American Indian Territory- 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>  
Theater Show: Mad Science- 1<sup>st</sup>  
Tricky Tim Magic Show- 1<sup>st</sup>  
Tenement Museum- 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Boston Tea Party- 5<sup>th</sup>
- *Assemblies*  
Mystic Aquarium- Beluga Whales (whole school show)  
Bash the trash (whole school show)
- *Additional Programming*  
NSS OnStage Presents Frozen Junior (all done virtually)  
Wordly Wise  
Math Super Stars-20 weeks  
International Week

### Social and Emotional Learning

- **The PTA along with Service Club supported various charities throughout the year including, Neighbor to Neighbor Toy Drive, Pajama Day, Favorite T-Shirt Day, Community Service Award for NSS students, and Valentines for Vets.**
- **The PTA promoted the special color theme days related to the districts social and emotional learning throughout the year.**
- The PTA sold spirit wear throughout the year at various PTA events **and had a 2 week flash sale. The PTA also gave clothing to anyone not able to afford it.**
- The first Friday of every month is Spirit Day, where the staff and students are encouraged to wear NSS clothing or the schools colors blue and white.
- The PTA pays for school supply kits and classroom funds for those unable to afford it.
- **The PTA donates any unclaimed clothing from lost and found twice a year.**

- Middle School Readiness Class taught to current Fifth graders to prepare them for Middle School-

#### Family and Community Engagement

- Breakfasts and lunches for the staff
- New Family Coffee and buddy families
- Veterans Day celebration
- Book Fairs (Fall and Spring all online)
- Staff Holiday Luncheon
- Halloween pumpkin decorating kits and display around fields in lieu of Halloween costume parade
- Membership Meetings – Speaker included Greenwich police officer talking about cyber security issues relevant to elementary children and United Way consultant who spoke about how to avoid “Summer Slide”
- Officer Krystie Rondini from GPD will speak directly to 5<sup>th</sup> graders on cyber security issues on 6/3/21
- Picnic Bingo
- Weekly Newsletter, “The Dragon’s Tale”
- Regular email blasts regarding school happenings
- Annual directory (online only-MTK) with minimum PTA membership
- Yearbook
- School Dismissal Manager
- Teacher Appreciation Week

#### Facilities

- PE Equipment
- Benches and tables for inside cafeteria and music room to allow social distancing during lunch and outside on grounds to give classes places to sit and have snacks during breaks
- Music and art supplies



## Old Greenwich School

### Curriculum Enrichment and Supplementation

#### Grade Specific:

- Bronx Zoo Virtual Field Trips: Animal Senses, Animal Diversity & Adaptations, Ecosystems & Habitats, Conservation Innovation
- Eli Whitney Workshop Virtual Programs: Pinball Machine, Measuremobiles, Robot Drum, Camera Obscura, Hands on Stories, CT Rocks, Electricity, Building Bugs, Magnetic Pendulum, Bauhaus Dancers, Bird Beak Variations, Weather Station
- 92Y Young Leaders Virtual Series: Christian McBride on Jazz, Jess Keating on the Intersection of Science and Writing, Kate DiCamillo on Observation and Writing
- Maritime Aquarium Virtual Field Trips: Fishtales, Structures and Functions, Adaptations of Maritime Animals
- NY Tenement Museum Virtual Field Trip: Baldizzi Family
- Bruce Museum Virtual Art Tour and Discussion: Emily Mason: Color, Shape, and Emotion
- Smithsonian Virtual Field Trip: Climate Change, Food Systems
- Odds Bodkin Virtual Performance: The Odyssey
- Ridgefield Playhouse Virtual Performance: Ellis Island
- Jamestown Settlement Virtual Tour
- Motoko: Japanese Storyteller
- Boston Tea Party Museum Virtual Tour
- Museum of the American Revolution: Through Their Eyes Tour and Think Like a Historian Tour
- Greenwich Historical Society: Sarah Bush Virtual Program
- Ruben Marrroquin: Spanish Weaving Workshop (In-Person)
- Journey into American Indian Territory: Eastern Woodland Tribes Virtual 2-Day Workshop
- American Revolution Museum at Yorktown virtual Tour
- Greenwich Historical Society: Patriots v. Loyalists hybrid virtual tour and in-person debate

- Wordmasters for grades 3-5, a Language Arts enrichment program open to all students in Grades 3 – 5 led virtually with teachers in spring
- Math Enrichment for grades 3-5. Led by teachers in the spring, virtually, before school to utilize a range of enrichment materials on topics such as Basic Multiplication and Division Fluency and Computation Workshop, Problem Solving Enrichment (addition/subtraction), Problem Solving Enrichment (Multiplication/Division)

#### All Grades:

- Latin American Journeys program with Bash the Trash
- Bees and Pollinators program, Stamford Museum and Nature Center (K-2)
- Bronx Zoo grade-level programming
- Tomaquag Museum Native American Storytelling and Singing
- Tahira's Freedom Stories program, through Arts for Learning NJ
- Soro Bindi (Ghanaian music and dance), through Arts for Learning CT
- Anne Pasquale's *Nellie Bly* (3-5) and *Little Living History* (K-2) through Arts for Learning CT
- Ruby Bridges
- Versatil Poetiq spoken word workshops, through Arts for Learning CT (3-5)
- Surcari (Latin American Percussion), through Arts for Learning CT (3-5)
- Digital Citizenship and Internet Safety with Katie Greer (3-5)
- Afters for this year was held virtually and we had over 40 students participate in the fall and winter sessions. Popular classes included chess, various arts & crafts courses and Lego at home. We were also able to put together a small musical for 4th and 5th graders, where they met over Google Meets during the first half, and then met outdoors for the final weeks, culminating in an outdoor performance. The children are performing songs and scenes from various musicals - Peter Pan, Little Mermaid, Guys & Dolls, and Annie.

- Host Early Birds Computer Skills & Activities Hour before school

### Visiting Authors:

- OGS mom and author Arwen Evans read her new book, *The Safe Return*, Q&A (Gr. K-2)
- Dr. Simran Jeet Singh gave a brief introduction to his Punjabi-Sikh roots and then read his book, *Fauja Singh Keeps Going*, Q&A (Gr. 3-5)
- Terry Border led an engaging presentation from his home studio in Indiana which included a behind-the-scenes look at how he builds the sets for his books. He provided an in-class project/worksheet, Q&A (Gr. K-5)
- Hena Khan led an insightful presentation about her Pakistani and Muslim heritage from her home in MD, Q&A (Gr. K-5)
- CT-based illustrator Jerry Craft discussed how his own childhood inspired his award winning graphic novel, *New Kid* then he demonstrated a lively digital drawing demo, Q&A (Gr. 3-5)
- Illustrator Ebony Glenn led a colorful presentation from her home studio in Atlanta where she demonstrated how a storyboard comes to life using digital tools in photoshop, Q&A (Gr. K-2)

(Due to Covid, Field Trips, Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, and Music on the Menu were not offered this year.)

### Social and Emotional Learning

- School Spirit Fridays
- Dolphin Depot Spirit Wear

### Family and Community Engagement

Events and Fundraisers

- Drive in Movie
- Un-Progressive Dinner
- New Family and Kindergarten welcome lawn signs
- School Photo Day
- Pumpkin Lady Unveiling Day
- WinterVirtual Book Fair and Spring Book Fair
- Family Scavenger Hunt (June - Tod's Point)
- OGS Yearbook
- School supply fundraiser – gives parents an easier option for obtaining school supplies
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade graduation activities

#### PTA Meetings and Hosted Events for Families

- First day of school PTA Welcome Coffee and Information Session
- Dean of the Yale School of Public Health, Dr. Vermund, parent talk on the covid-19 pandemic
- New Families Committee offered 'buddy' families to all new Old Greenwich School families and hosted social events
- PTA Meeting – to kick off the year, featuring Principal Bencivengo
- Hosted "Grade Level Coffees with Principal" for overview of curriculum and expectations for the school year
- Class Coffees hosted by class parents
- Hosted Kindergarten Orientation Presentation
- Rebekah Gienapp parent talk on "Having effective conversations with children about race."
- Katie Greer parent talk on "Internet Technology Safety and Digital Citizenship"

#### Outreach Events

- Promoted a Family Centers Thanksgiving fundraiser
- December Month of Meals delivery to Kids in Crisis

#### Teacher Outreach and Support

- Provided teacher welcome luncheon
- Provide hospitality at monthly staff meetings

- Provided meals to our teachers during December Teacher/Parent Conferences
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Teacher Grants (outlined in Facilities)

#### PTA Communication

- The PTA creates the weekly online “Between the Waves” school newsletter
- PTA maintains database of family information used to send Membership Toolkit messages as needed and to create a printed school directory
- Membership Toolkit is also the payment system, including APP
- PTA maintains and updates a board outside the school and in-school digital message screen with current events and photos
- Annual school Yearbook
- Maintain the PTA webpage
- Submit press releases to local papers alerting them to activities and programs happening at OGS

#### Facilities:

##### Capital Purchases

- Balls for playground
- Rainmats for entrance ways
- Chalk for playground
- Chromecast purchase

##### Teacher Grants

- Supplies for Weir Farm writing project (4th grade)
- Drying racks for Art classroom
- Microphone for Music classroom
- Fossil digging kits (3rd grade)
- Document cameras
- MindSet workbooks for Psychologist
- Resource room supplies

##### Green Schools/Beautification

- K-5 bulb planting event, Fall 2020
- Crayon recycling initiative, Spring 2021

## **Parkway School**

### **Curriculum Enrichment**

#### Schoolwide:

- JLine Dance Crew - anti-bullying, school wide assembly (virtual)
- Critically acclaimed author Dan Gutman met (virtually) with students in each grade .

#### Kindergarten (all virtual):

- Eli Whitney Workshop: No Elephants Welcome. Story and set build.

#### First Grade (all virtual):

- High Touch High Tech met with first-graders to learn about the natural forces of gravity, friction, and magnetism and how they start, stop and accelerate everything around us.
- Stamford Nature Center, Maple Syrup and tasting
- Author Visit with Jerry Pallotta, plus we bought a book for each child in the grade by the author
- . Animal Embassy virtual visit
- Author visit with Sandra Markle, plus we bought a book for each child in the grade by the author
- . Eli Whitney Workshop, Life Stages of a Butterfly

#### Second Grade (all virtual):

- High Touch High Tech, Light Fever
- . Greenwich Historical Society, ask a historian via Skype
- . Author Visit with Jerry Pallotta, plus we bought a book for each child by the author
- Eli Whitney Workshop, building and learning a Magnetic Pendulum
- . Eli Whitney Workshop, building and learning of about sustainable birdhouses

#### Third Grade (all virtual):

- Bruce Museum, rock detectives

- Eli Whitney Workshop, Rock of CT
- Eli Whitney Workshop, Bird Beaks
- Eli Whitney Workshop, Magnetic Pendulum
- Animal Embassy, animal adaptations
- Bruce Museum, Woodland Life
- Journeys, American Indian Territories

Fourth Grade (all virtual):

- Eli Whitney Workshop, Pinball Machines
- Eli Whitney Workshop, ElectriCity
- Greenwich Historical Society, Loyalists vs Patriots
- High Touch High Tech, Edison's Workshop
- Animal Embassy, Ecology on the LI Sound
- Soundwaters, Exploring the Sound

Fifth Grade:

- Maritime Aquarium, water pollution (virtual)
- Eli Whitney Workshop, Camera Obscura (virtual)
- Eli Whitney Workshop, Robot Drum (virtual)
- Constitutional Walking Tour, virtual Philly field trip (with cheesesteaks!)
- Soundwaters, exploring the sound (on site)

**Family and Community Engagement**

- Hosted Back to school luncheon for teachers
- Picture Day
- PTA (virtual) meetings
- Fall Parent Wine Tasting (virtual)
- Dance-a-thon
- Winter Book Fair (virtual)



- Gingerbread House competition (done at home, judging by pictures)
- Snowman build competition (done at home)
- Virtual Teacher Appreciation Week
- 5th Grade Moving Up 'Celebration' including a trip to Camp Simmons
- 5th Grade variety show (digital)
  
- 5th Grade congratulation signs
- Field Day (including shirts for staff and ice cream truck)
- Yearbooks

- Parent Painting and Margarita party (virtual)

#### **Facilities & Support**

- School Garden project (with the help of an Eagle Scout)
- Book fair donates books to all the classrooms and Learning Commons
- Support for MemberHub, online family directory and school calendar
- Fluoride Rinse
- Online Spirit Wear Shop
- Scholarship Donations – Book Awards, Distinguished Teacher, PTAC

## Riverside School PTA

### **Curriculum Enrichment**

- Despite restrictions on visitors in the school building this year, the PTA was still able to sponsor an array of enrichment programs in the arts including author visits, poetry workshops, and music programs. Most enrichment programs were conducted virtually during the 2020-21 school year.
- **Riverside's annual STEM Fair** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) offers students a chance to sharpen their STEM skills as they explore their world and/or create solutions to real-world problems. This year, the Riverside PTA offered a **"STEM at Home" challenge** in lieu of our usual in person Fair. During the challenge, students had the opportunity to choose from suggested projects or pursue their own ideas at home. Participants submitted their projects to the PTA's website for a chance to win an exciting prize. We are looking forward to being able to host our annual STEM Fair in person in the Riverside gym again soon.
- The Riverside School PTA has continued to build on the success of its **Summer Reading initiative** as a way to encourage reading. For the summer of 2020, the school chose four books with an "Adventures in Toyland" theme for students to read independently or with their parents for a shared summer reading experience. The books selected all featured toys coming to life - *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *Toys Go Out*, *The Doll People* and *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*. Typically, the Summer Read Initiative culminates in back-to-school activities in the fall. This summer's initiative features an "Adventures in Engineering" theme. Each of the five books selected includes characters who create solutions to problems using everyday objects. The books chosen for the 2021 Summer Read Initiative are: *Iggy Peck, Architect*; *Rosie Revere, Engineer*; *Rosie Revere and the Raucous Riveters*; *Ada Twist and the Perilous Pants*; and *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.
- **Poetry Week and Poetry Picnic** are held annually in conjunction with visits by Ted Scheu. This year, Ted conducted workshops virtually with each class in grades K-4.
- The Riverside School PTA was able to host a wonderful outdoor **Arts Field Day** event for our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students this May. Each student had the opportunity to participate in two 55-minute workshops with professional artists. Workshop topics included Chinese Brush Painting, Acrylic Painting, Tai Chi, Improv, Hip Hop, Yoga, and Magic.
- In typical years, **Riverside offers fall and spring Afters** – Partnered with Flex Academies. We are ready to resume the Afters program as soon as we have permission from the district.
- Riverside was not able to host its annual **Winter Musical Production** this year, but we look forward to resuming this much loved tradition as soon as possible.
- **The Riverside Rhythms** program is designed to allow our children to sit back, relax and enjoy music during their lunch break. Normally, the program is offered around six times each academic year with the goal of expanding children's

exposure to diverse music and culture. We look forward to resuming this program as soon as possible.

- In addition to arts enrichment programs, the Riverside School PTA also offers science enrichment programs. We have detailed all of our programs below.

### **Arts Enrichment**

#### **Programs for All Grades :**

- **Rochel Coleman.** Actor, poet, and storyteller Rochel Coleman returned to Riverside School to celebrate Black History. This year, Mr. Coleman presented *MLK: Amazing Grace* in honor of Martin Luther King Day. Students in grades 3-5 also had the opportunity to engage with Mr. Coleman virtually in Q&A sessions during which they further delved into Dr. King's legacy and how it lives on today.
- **CT Storytellers – Election Extravaganza.** Every four years to coincide with the presidential election cycle, Carol Glynn leads an informative assembly about the election process. The assembly involves student participation, song and dance to teach about the foundation of our government and the election process. It includes a lively depiction of primaries, national conventions, big campaigns, Election Day, and the Inauguration.

#### **Programs by Grade:**

During the 2020-21 school year, the PTA offered most of its enrichment programs virtually due to COVID restrictions. We are looking forward to bringing back enrichment programs in person as soon as we can. We also look forward to resuming several annual favorites that we were not able to hold virtually this year, including the weeklong **dance residency workshop with Double up Entertainment** during which students participate in hip hop workshops during their PE classes (all grades), master drummer **Henry Jones** (grade 1), **Play in a Day** (grade 3), **Connecticut Historical Society's Immigration and Migration to Connecticut** program (grade 4), and **Michelle Mozian's** Chinese brush painting workshop (grade 5).

#### **Kindergarten:**

- **Alyssa Satin Capucilli.** The award-winning author of the *Biscuit* series joins our kindergarteners for an interactive writing workshop. Ms. Capucilli discusses her writing process with the students, then brainstorms with them as to how they would write their own Biscuit stories. With a focus on character, plot, setting, and the use of repetitive language, Ms. Capucilli helps the students gather their ideas and encourages them as they draft their own original stories.
- **Lot Therrio.** Storyteller Lot Therrio draws from stories around the world that teach us about our similarities, and helps students to discover the wonder in the tales he tells.
- **Ted Scheu, poetry workshop.** Always a favorite, "That Poetry Guy" teaches the children how to bring their ideas to life through poetry. This year, Ted's workshop with our Kindergarten classes focused on making visual and sensory comparisons.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

- **Marcie Aboff, author.** Marcie's visit with first grade focused on her life as an author. In an interactive assembly, Marcie talked about how she gets her story ideas and all of the people that work together to make a book. She also discussed her experience with rejection, the importance of persistence, and answered student questions.
- **Ted Scheu, poetry workshop.** Always a favorite, "That Poetry Guy" teaches the children how to bring their ideas to life through poetry. His dynamic program "gets the kids revved up" about writing. This year, Ted's workshop with our first grade classes focused on rhyme and rhythm.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

- **Dan Gutman, author.** Best selling author Dan Gutman's fun visit with the second grade focused on his *My Weird School* series of books. He shared how he got the idea for the series and how he writes the books. Dan gave students a sneak peek of the next book to be published in the *My Weird School* series and showed them how they can write their own stories in nine simple steps. A very lively Q&A session followed!
- **Marcie Aboff, author.** Marcie's visit with second grade focused on her life as an author. In an interactive assembly, Marcie talked about how she gets her story ideas and all of the people that work together to make a book. She also discussed her experience with rejection, the importance of persistence, and answered student questions.
- **Ted Scheu, poetry workshop.** In our second grade program, Ted shows our students how to use metaphors and similes to enhance their writing and then encourages them as they write their own poems using imagery and figurative language. This year, they focused on making visual and sensory comparisons.
- **Mariachi Emperadores de Puebla.** An authentic Mariachi band joins our second graders in their end-of-year fiesta. This annual celebration brings to life the material the students have learned in their final social studies unit, A Cultural Study of Mexico.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

- **Government Program by Carol Glynn.** Students learned about the democratic process in our state and federal government.
- **Dan Gutman, author.** Best selling author Dan Gutman's fun visit with the third grade focused on both his *My Weird School* series of books and his *Baseball Card Adventure* series. He shared how he got the idea for the series and how he writes the books. Dan gave students a sneak peek of the next book to be published in the *My Weird School* series and showed them how they can write their own stories in nine simple steps. A very lively Q&A session followed!
- **Lauren Tarshis, author.** Lauren's visit combined stories of resilience with insights into the process of researching and writing. Lauren is the author of the *I Survived* and the *Emma Jean Lazarus* series and the editor of *Storyworks* magazine. She

connected extremely well with our students, interspersing answers to their questions throughout her presentation.

- **Marcie Aboff, author.** Marcie's visit with the third grade focused on inspiration for story ideas. In an interactive assembly, Marcie emphasized the importance of adding details and descriptive words to bring a story to life. She talked about the beginning, middle, turning point, and end of stories, as well as vocabulary choices, description, dialogue, show-don't-tell, and more. Students were encouraged to use their imagination in their writing and had the opportunity to ask questions.
- **Ted Scheu, poetry workshop.** This year, Ted's program for our third graders focused on writing from the heart. Ted encourages them as they write their own poems using imagery and figurative language. The students then get to work on their own poems, often choosing to share their original work at our annual Poetry Picnic.
- **Journeys into American Indian Territory, Eastern Woodland's program.** Students explored how Native Americans of our region met their three basic needs of food, clothing and shelter by using natural resources. They also focused on traditional government including how laws were passed and how leaders were selected. Students experienced hands-on activities during live virtual sessions on traditional games and stories as well as the use of symbols in communication.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

- **Dan Gutman, author.** Best selling author Dan Gutman's fun visit with the fourth grade focused on both his *My Weird School* series of books and his *Baseball Card Adventure* series. He shared how he got the idea for the series and how he writes the books. Dan gave students a sneak peek of the next book to be published in the *My Weird School* series and showed them how they can write their own stories in nine simple steps. A very lively Q&A session followed!
- **Lauren Tarshis, author.** Lauren's visit combined stories of resilience with insights into the process of researching and writing. Lauren is the author of the *I Survived* and the *Emma Jean Lazarus* series and the editor of *Storyworks* magazine. She connected extremely well with our students, interspersing answers to their questions throughout her presentation.
- **Marcie Aboff, author.** Marcie's visit with the fourth grade focused on inspiration for story ideas. In an interactive assembly, Marcie emphasized the importance of adding details and descriptive words to bring a story to life. She talked about the beginning, middle, turning point, and end of stories, as well as vocabulary choices, description, dialogue, show-don't-tell, and more. Students were encouraged to use their imagination in their writing and had the opportunity to ask questions.
- **Ted Scheu, poetry workshop.** "That Poetry Guy" teaches the children how to bring their ideas to life through poetry. In our fourth grade program, Ted focused on the writing process and revision. Using his own poems as examples, Ted demonstrates the process and importance of revising. The students then get to

work on their own poems, often choosing to share their original work at our annual Poetry Picnic.

- **Greenwich Historical Society, Patriots vs. Loyalists: The American Revolution.** Students learned about the experience of the Revolutionary War in Greenwich. Students viewed recruitment videos from both a Patriot and a Loyalist, and the classes saw actual artifacts from the archives from the Revolution. Teachers then had the opportunity to facilitate a full class debate with students preparing an argument to support their position.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

- **Dan Gutman, Author.** Best selling author Dan Gutman's fun visit with the fifth grade focused on his *Flashback Four* series of books and his *Baseball Card Adventure* series. He shared how he got the idea for the series and how he writes the books. Dan gave students a sneak peek of the next book to be published and showed them how they can write their own stories in nine simple steps. A very lively Q&A session followed!
- **Lauren Tarshis, author.** Lauren's visit combined stories of resilience with insights into the process of researching and writing. Lauren is the author of the *I Survived* and the *Emma Jean Lazarus* series and the editor of *Storyworks* magazine. She connected extremely well with our students, interspersing answers to their questions throughout her presentation.
- **Dragoons.** Students wrapped up their year-long study of the American Revolution with an outdoor presentation by Connecticut's 2nd Regiment Light Dragoons on military and civilian life during the Colonial Period. Demonstrations include colonial clothing, games, money, and music. A discussion of the Greater Horseneck Battle explains the role of the Dragoons in Riverside during the Revolution.

### Science Enrichment Programs:

During the 2020-21 school year, the PTA offered virtual science enrichment opportunities. We are looking forward to bringing back in-person programming as soon as we can. We also look forward to resuming several annual favorites that were not available virtually this year.

### Programs by Grade:

#### Kindergarten

- **Eco Kids Unite!**: virtual field trip with Stepping Stones
- **Amazing Mammals**
- **Weather Wizards**
- **Innovation Station, Super Skyscrapers**: virtual field trip with Stepping Stones

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

- **Invisible Forces**
- **Animal Adaptations**
- **Zoom to the Moon**

- **Primarily Plants**
- **Space Matters:** virtual field trip with Stepping Stones

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

- **Bash the Trash**
- **Dinosaurs Rock**
- **Give Me Dirt**
- **Reptiles and Amphibians**
- **Dinosaur State Park:** virtual field trip

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

- **What's the Matter**
- **Dig It**
- **Endangered Species**
- **Bird Beak Variations**

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

- **Newton's Day at the Park**
- **Dirtmeister's Electricity Show**
- **Magnetic Pendulums**

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

- **Power of Light**
- **Vibes**
- **Sustainability program with Eli Whitney Museum**

### Social and Emotional Learning

- Riverside School participates in the **District-wide norms** and teachers incorporate this into their morning meetings each day.
- **ROPES** – Riverside School follows the District Norms and when a teacher notices a student following the norms, they will receive a “ROPES” slip. The teacher photographed the student and submitted it to the PTA, which created a photo print that was displayed on our Wall of Respect for the entire school to admire.
- The PTA supports our school's **Riverside Rangers** – this leadership opportunity is a direct outgrowth of our ROPES social emotional learning program. Students in grade 5 are trained to be leaders in the fall of their 5th grade year. Students serve as activity leaders for special events (e.g., book fairs & assemblies). Unfortunately, due to COVID the Rangers program was put on hold this year. We eagerly await the return of this program, hopefully during the 2021-22 school year.
- This year, the PTA instituted **Wellness Wednesdays**, where a wellness-related message was shared by the principal during morning announcements to students on a Wednesday of every month. Topics included anti-bullying, celebrating World Kindness Day, the importance of giving, and sleep awareness.
- This year, the Riverside PTA-sponsored a **Wellness Week**, during which Riverside staff, students, and parents were encouraged to participate in a week-long challenge to recognize emotional and mental well-being as part of our total body health. During the week, students participated in daily “Mindful Minute” breaks at school and a variety of wellness activities were made available to do at home

- that support healthy social, emotional, and behavioral development. Daily themes included Mindful Monday, Try It Tuesday, Worry-Free Wednesday, Thankful Thursday and Feelings Friday.
- The PTA organized a **Nutrition Week** to encourage students to eat a balanced diet that will give them energy and the nutrients they need as they grow. It included activities, announcements and resources to highlight the importance of healthy eating.
  - The PTA organized its annual **Fitness Week** to encourage children to make exercise a part of their daily routine. Students were asked to keep track of their daily physical activities during the week and submit an activity survey. Students who participated were entered into a drawing to receive a raffle prize.
  - **Riverside School Spirit Wear** organized by the PTA Apparel team, including an official launch of our new Red Hawk mascot and logo this year.
  - The PTA kicked off its nascent **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** initiative with a presentation by (and interactive conversation via Zoom with) Rebekah Gienapp, who shared her expertise with Riverside parents on speaking to our children about race and racism. We hope, in conjunction with the new PTAC DEI committee, to continue developing our DEI effort at Riverside next year.
  - **School Spirit.** The PTA organized monthly Spirit Days during which students were encouraged to participate in school-wide themed days (such as Pajama Day or Riverside red shirt days). The Red Hawk mascot (staff member in costume) often made an appearance to greet students on the mornings of our monthly Spirit Days.
  - **Staff Appreciation Week** returned with gusto this year to show our appreciation for everything Riverside staff has done during this most unusual year. Each day featured a different activity or treat, including a morning coffee truck, a taco truck for lunch, gift cards, smoothie day and individually packaged homemade treats.
  - After recognizing how truly fortunate Riverside (and GPS) families were for having the choice between in-person and remote learning from day one of this school year, the PTA organized a **Havemeyer Appreciation** effort to say “thank you” to Dr. Jones and her team with handmade cards and drawings from Riverside students (and even some grateful parents). The cards and drawings were then delivered in a basket with other tokens of appreciation to Havemeyer.

#### **Family and Community Engagement**

- **Hosted virtual Zoom with Principal Weiss** prior to the start of the school year to answer questions and prepare families for in person or remote learning
- **PTA purchased welcome back meals for staff** during training period leading up to the start of school
- **Grade Level Coffees on Zoom** with Principal Chris Weiss and Vice Principal Safiya Key to connect with families, answer questions, and give an inside peek into the school
- **The Community Service Committee** hosted several School-wide community service initiatives:



- o Drive thru food drive for Inspirica and Neighbor to Neighbor
  - o “Holiday’s for Haiti” to support an orphanage in Haiti
  - o “Filling in the Blanks” online food drive
  - o Riverside “Fit for Life” event where students participated in fitness stations during PE and learned about food allergies. Contributions throughout the event from families benefited FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education)
- **Green Schools Committee**
  - o **Earth Week** – our Green Committee worked with the Town of Greenwich on its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Week festivities, which was ultimately re-worked to an at-home version
  - o **Textile Drive; Halloween Costumes, Coats and Boots Drive; Book Swap**
  - o **National Walk/Bike to School Days**
  - o **Used Battery Collection; Holiday Light Collection**
  - o **Waste-free Lunch**
- **Health & Wellness Committee**
  - o **Nutrition Week; Sleep Awareness Week; Allergy Speaker Kyle Dine** returned this year, offering virtual content on food allergy awareness; **Wellness Week; Fitness Week**
- **The Peek of the Week** is Riverside School PTA’s weekly digital newsletter in which the PTA communicates important school, PTA and community news and events
- PTA publishes a **Riverside School PTA Directory**. This year, we went digital, providing only a PDF version of the directory to its members.
- **Annual Book Fair in the Fall** – fully virtual, with Main Street Books as its vendor
- **Veteran’s Day ceremony** is a special annual ceremony where we honor guests, including veterans and community officials to celebrate and honor our veterans. This year, we were fortunate to still be able to hold the event in person, outdoors, with only our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students (socially distanced, in masks) watching special guests, such as First Selectman Fred Camillo, Police Chief Jim Heavey, and Veteran Erford Porter.
- **Boo Bash** was converted to a drive-in movie viewing of The Greatest Showman. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions tightening the day before, the event had to be canceled.
- **The PTA Garden** was maintained, and then eventually underwent a complete renovation. Old, deteriorating beds were replaced with new ones in a configuration that better suits teaching in the garden (an entire class can now fit with ample room).
- **Beautification** - Students along with PTA volunteers planted numerous bulbs all around the school grounds and was beautiful to see the flowers blooming this spring
- **PTA Fall Meeting** – Featuring Rebekah Gienapp who presented on DEI, specifically how to teach and talk to children about racism
- **PTA Spring Meeting** – took place on May 25. In addition to annual agenda items (budget and board slate for next year), the PTA also renewed and approved its updated bylaws. The meeting featured presenter, Alexandra Stafford, food

blogger and author, who demonstrated live making “the internet’s favorite bread recipe”

- **PTA School Supplies**
- **PTA School Photos**
- PTA provided individually packaged meals and snacks to our teachers during December Teacher/Parent Conferences
- PTA Maintains and updates the web site – **RIVPTA.ORG**
- **PTA PR** writes and submits press releases to local papers to promote programs and news happenings at Riverside School
- **Kindergarten information** sessions with Riverside Co-Presidents will not be held in the traditional format, but the PTA is working with the School to disseminate information to incoming kindergarten families via pre-recorded video content
- We were sad that we had to cancel two of our school’s favorite events, **Pizza Bingo** and **Riverside Run** (a tradition that had run consecutively for over 35 years) again, but plans are already underway to hold these events in the next school year!

#### **Facilities**

- Completed a **renovation of the teaching garden**, where we replaced and reconfigured raised beds to better accommodate an entire class section of students
- Funded and installed a permanent **gaga ball pit** in the back corner of the school field (with the necessary approvals from Facilities and the School)
- Commenced a project, in conjunction with two teachers, to apply a variety of games and activities via stencil on the school blacktop as part of a grant the school received from **Peaceful Playgrounds**

## **Central Middle School**

### **Curriculum Enrichment and Supplementation**

- Writers' workshop/improv group-Bryan Crandall
- The Birdman
- Frank Gall- "reptile guy" Cold Blooded Critters
- Career Workshop with CMS parents discussing their vocation.
- DC Comes to CMS for the day- virtual speakers: Fred Camillo, Jim Himes, William Tong
- Poetry & Art Contests

### **Social and Emotional Learning**

- Empathy/Compassion Workshops- Pilot 3-part curriculum. Dr. Evelyn Bilius Lolis
- Mykee Fallon "YOU DON'T KNOW ME UNTIL YOU KNOW ME"
- 'Like' movie documentary exploring social media's impact on our lives.

### **Family and Community Engagement**

- Friday Facts newsletter
- Membership Toolkit (directory – calendar – sign-ups - store)
- Teachers/Staff/Custodians Back-to-School Luncheon
- 6th Grade Ice Cream Back to School Social
- Kona Ice Truck all grades end of year treat
- 8th Grade Celebration (video montage and time capsule)
- Local business fundraisers at Val's, Splurge, La Taqueria, Pizza Post, habitat greenwich, Outhouse Orchards, Adventure park, Boundless Adventures, Chipotle, OGTA, Future Picassos, Cobber North, Fairfield Pizza, Randy's Wines, McArdle's, Diane's books, Gofer, Classic Kids, Mike's Organic
- Holiday CMS Shopping Days – partnering with local merchants in Greenwich
- Free Virtual Events- Trivia Night, Baking Session, Drawing by Future Picassos, AaHa Health/Nutrition
- Outdoor Fundraising Concerts: September (Greenwich Historical), May (joint 3 middle schools – Cobber North), June (Greenwich Botanical with Corporate Sponsorship from Web Realty Power Team)
- Teacher Appreciation Week – celebrated with the Big Green Pizza Truck and with Amazon gift cards to all teachers and staff, two breakfasts
- Scholarships (PTAC and GHS)
- Empathy/Compassion Workshop for Parents.
- Spring Membership meeting – speakers from GHS including Karen Foster (Dir. Student Activities), Gus Lindine (Dir. Athletics) and Fred Reisch (Resource officer).
- Open house teacher's dinner
- Purchased 12 outdoor picnic tables for general school use, tents and several various items during the school year for teachers/staff
- Outstanding Administrator Award- Tom Healy

- DTA-Allison Fallon
- Family Tennis tournaments in Oct and June
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Field trip to Tod's Point/Clambake Area.
- Formed a remote students and new comers committee.

## **Eastern Middle School**

### **Curriculum Enrichment**

- **Mini Innovation Grants** - This program is used to innovate creative learning opportunities for different student learning styles and to support deeper grounding in course materials. We award grants to staff and teachers for innovative teaching materials, professional development, or other items that they believe will enhance students' experiences. This year we awarded grants to assist with art supplies including a new drawing tablet. We also granted access to enhanced digital learning software for teachers.
- **Judith Altmann, Holocaust Survivor** - Mrs. Altmann shared with 8th grade students her experience of living in and surviving the Holocaust, as well as the importance of tolerance, inclusion and remembering history. (8th Grade) Virtual via zoom
- **Skyping with Scientist** - students had multiple skype session with The Smithsonian Institute scientists
- **Poets in Residence** - Outspoken Literary Consultants came for a residence with the 6th Grade. Acclaimed authors and consultants, Sara Holbrook and Michael Salinger spent a week at EMS enriching the 6th grade English curriculum with their assembly and writing workshops. Their goal is to help students develop complex thinking and the literacy skills they will need to succeed in the future. You can click [here](#) and learn more about the Outspoken Literary Consultants. This is the second year the PTA has provided this enrichment experience for the 6th grade.
- **Reading Images with the Bruce Museum** - Presentation by the Bruce Museum language arts program to teach symbolism, author's perspective and setting. (6th Grade)

### **Social and Emotional Learning**

- **Katie Greer** - 6th graders had a virtual presentation with Katie Greer is an internet safety expert who brings her knowledge and experience into the classroom to better equip students as they navigate their world online. Katie's shared her insights and expertise to help identify and develop safer uses of technology for a variety of online platforms.
- **Dr. Michael Fowlin presents "You Don't Know Me Until You Know Me"** - VIRTUAL A talented theatrical performer with a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Dr. Fowlin took the audience on an experiential journey, having them

re-examine core precepts taught to us as early as 1st grade. He used many of his gifts - humor, performance art, storytelling, psychology, theatrical monologue, and his personal journey - to create a moving experience for all. Dr. Fowlin's mission is to create an atmosphere of worldwide inclusion, not just tolerance, toward all people.

- o 7th Grade Zoom - Dr. Fowlin's "You Don't Know Me Until You Know Me" performance.
  - o 8th Grade Zoom - Dr. Fowlin's follow-up performance titled "I Am Not The Enemy"
  - o Parent Presentation and Question/Answer Session - Dr. Fowlin's "You Don't Know Me Until You Know Me"
- **Liked** - Virtual program. Had a viewing of the film "Liked" which probes into the family struggles over social media. It sheds light on the role it is playing in children's development and self esteem. The film offers solutions on how we can help our kids navigate the digital world. Parents watched the program in the evening. Students debriefed afterwards in their ABs.
- **Mix It Up Lunch** - Not hosted this year due to Covid. The goal of Mix It Up Day is for students at EMS, and around the country, to get to know each other better as individuals. They were randomly seated in the cafeteria, encouraging them to step out of their comfort zone to get to know someone else. Questions were placed on each lunch table to start conversations, encouraging students to identify, question and cross social boundaries. Together with the EMS Guidance Department, the PTA and parent volunteers helped to facilitate activities at lunch for students to sit and engage with a variety of students.

### **Family and Community Engagement**

- **Book Fairs** - First Online book fair. Our PTA Volunteers worked with the EMS Staff to host a fall book fair. Funds went directly to the media center to provide books and resource materials for the teachers. Book vouchers were funded by the PTA with a goal to get a new book in the hands of every Eastern Middle School student.
- **PTA Meetings/Speakers** - Through collaboration with staff and listening to parents' needs and interests, our PTA Speaker Coordinator focused on bringing in experts on topics of interest to educate our school parent body and enhance the connection between school and home.

- o **Back to School Coffee** - Virtual via Zoom Parent Meeting: Welcoming parents back to school and shared goals of PTA for the fall. Jason Goldstein share information on what the year was going to look like for students and answered parents questions.
- o **“Casual Conversation with Interim Superintendent Toni Jones”** - Zoom Coffee Talk: Thoughts on academic performance, student well-being, Budget, SEL Covid, thoughts on next year, EMS and other parental topics of interest, Q&A.
- o **“Liked” Film screening and discussion panel** - Had a viewing of the film “Liked” which probes into the family struggles over social media. It sheds light on the role it is playing in children’s development and self esteem. The film offers solutions on how we can help our kids navigate the digital world. There was a panel of doctors and the producer for a discussion after the viewing.
- o **“Endurance Parenting”** - Cristina Young, LCSW A local parent therapist presented a webinar on "Endurance Parenting Tips" for this unique and uncertain time at home. She discussed important topics such as self-care for parents and students, the adolescent brain, communication, relationship building and acceptance and management of the current environment. She also discussed why grieving is ok.
- o **“Beyond EMS”** - Coffee Talk with Gus Lindine, GHS Athletic Director, Karen Foster, GHS Director of Student Activities, Patrick Taylor Director of choirs and GHS School Resource Officer, Fred Reisch.
- o **Parent Fundraiser** - This May we held a virtual parent social with a wine tasting and trivia night.
- **Scholarships** - Thanks to generous PTA contributions, graduating Greenwich High School students from Eastern Middle School may qualify for EMS Book Awards to help defer the cost of college books and expenses. The PTA underwrites 12 different book awards to capture a variety of student achievements and recognize the outstanding work of our graduates. Additionally, the PTA maintained the tradition of contributing to the PTAC partnership with the Greenwich Scholarship Association.
- **Spirit Wear/School Pride** - Our students and staff take pride in our school and its successes, whether at Gator Walk, a basketball game or a math team event. Our Spirit Wear team provided Gator Gear at cost for our community to show their pride with EMS merchandise. Additionally, our team created Staff Spirit Wear, which was worn proudly by our staff on Fridays.

- **Teachers Appreciation Events: Back to School Lunch & Teacher Appreciation Week** - Parents sponsored a luncheon at the beginning of the school year for all teachers and staff. In the spring, we held a fundraiser to collect parent donations and sent all teachers and staff generous gift cards (since we could do our normal TA week activities due to school shutdown). We did an additional breakfast in April to thank them
- **Parent Communications -**
  - Summer Gator Bytes Mailing: This is our back-to-school newsletter, providing all things “Eastern” that parents and students need to know prior to the start of the school year. In collaboration with the school office, we provided information to help with a smooth transition to the school year.
  - Gator Bytes Newsletter: Our weekly newsletter is our main communication tool to connect with our parents about school and PTA events, community activities, district news and various opportunities for families. It is our main method of staying connected and providing ongoing communication between the school and home.
  - Eblast Announcements: On occasion, we send special announcements to the parent community regarding events happening at EMS or in the district.
  - Student Directory: This year we offered an online directory only via Membership Toolkit.
  - Online Membership: Families were able to immediately sign up as a member of our school PTA via Membership Toolkit. This allowed us to efficiently provide important tax donation letters and membership information upon online enrollment.

## **Facilities**

- **School Beautification** - We take pride in our school and provide seasonal plantings in planters by the front entrance, as well as in the office.
- **Property Donations** - The PTA donated 25 picnic tables to allow for outdoor classes and lunch seating.



# GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL PTA

## 2020–2021 Annual Report

- **Goals**

- *Build Parent Engagement*
  - Given we were unable to meet in-person this year, the GHS PTA facilitated and provided access to all PTA Board Meetings and General Membership Meetings for our GHS PTA Board of Directors, Parents, Faculty and Administrators through Zoom.
  - Hosted a successful Membership Drive and relevant parent education programs at our general meetings along with grade-level meetings for 9th 10th, 11th and 12th grades in the fall and spring.
  - Established Grade Level Ambassadors to enhance and build parent engagement.
- *Increase and improve communications with parents, Greenwich Community and BOE.*
  - Successfully uncoupled our monthly newsletter from GHS's PLink, creating more definition between GHS and GHS PTA messaging
  - In addition to our monthly newsletter, we utilized our online platform, MembershipToolkit to send targeted emails to parents with updates on district issues and school and grade related events.
  - Increased use of social media and newspapers to convey the work of the PTA.
  - Spoke throughout the year at BOE meetings to convey PTA accomplishments and support the needs of GHS
- *Increase PTA Membership.*
  - Membership communications were revised and sent frequently throughout the year. Given our remote status for all volunteers, we had to rely on our direct marketing to parents for support and were successful.
- *Budget Allocation*
  - Due to the pandemic, GHS PTA was able to pivot from typical spending and create meaningful Distance Learning Technology grants
  - Due to the pandemic and need for social distance, GHS PTA created safe outdoor spaces for our students and faculty with additional picnic tables which include ADA compliant picnic tables.

### **Curriculum Enrichment & Supplementation**

- Given the pandemic, the largest portion of GHS PTA spending is school improvement and curriculum enrichment through our Distance Learning Technology grants. This year we have funded grants for our music, science and math departments. Hundreds of our students at GHS will be supported by these grants. Our Ventures in Education program allows teachers to apply for funding for innovative programs for their classroom and this year we purchased advanced cameras, tripods, cases and lenses for our Video Production and Digital Media department.
- We provide outreach assistance for families with financial need. Due to the pandemic, this support was communicated to all GHS families, not just those that had previously been identified. Fees for ACT/SAT classes, yearbooks, cap and gowns, merit and need-based scholarships and field trips are partially paid by the PTA.
- We support a grant process for AP exam fees for students with financial need who do not qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch discounts.

### **• Social-Emotional Learning**

- The GHS PTA partners with staff and students in producing a multi-faceted week of special programming, Diversity Week. We help shape and fund special keynote events that are learning opportunities with the ability to inspire conversation and thought with strong relevance to the GPS Strategic Plan. The varied events promote conversations and learning that reflect back into the classroom, with learning involved relative to various academic disciplines and the opportunity for growth in personal development and civic responsibility for our students.

### **• Family & Community Engagement**

- Grade Level meetings for 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th were established and were facilitated two times, fall and spring, providing families with applicable and timely information of milestones. In this pandemic, these meetings were a way to support our parent community and build on our engagement with families.
- Our PTA continued the work of providing parent education. Our programs offer information from experts on current topics and recurring needs to help members enhance best practices in teen parenting. This year's programs included: *Post High School Planning & the College Admissions Process*, *Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health Resources*, *What's Next*, *COVID and the Future of our Schools* and *Building Character and Resilience in Teens*. The programs were videotaped and made available on the Parent Resources page of our website.

- The GHS PTA reaches out to neighbors who live near the school to keep them informed of school events that might affect the neighborhood and to invite them to attend events at the high school.
- Parent engagement is a cornerstone of the National PTA. The GHS PTA encourages parents to become involved with the school as a way of engaging them and bringing them closer to the pulse of their child's education. In a typical year, we provide nearly 6,000 parent volunteer hours to the five Houses, the College and Career Center, the Media Center, Student Activities, and Student Employment. During the pandemic, certain volunteers continued to support their positions remotely.

- **Facilities**

- During the BOE, BET, and RTM phases of the budget process, we advocated for capital projects including the redesign of the front entrance at GHS, Cardinal Stadium, GHS Front Entryway project, and the Field Remediation project. We purchased additional red picnic tables for students and faculty use. The tables are located in the courtyard behind the security desk. Additionally, we purchased WiFi boosters to be positioned outside to provide outside learning opportunities as well as support safety and access between parents and their children when waiting for them. We also purchased T.V. Monitors for each House, Science, Gym PAC, Black Box and Media Center areas, to support real time communication for students and faculty.

- **Looking Forward**

- Consistent with our usual practice, goal setting for the GHS PTA and certain committees will occur over the summer among GHS PTA Board members and the respective committee chairs.
- We look forward to advocating for the GHS community, including students, staff, and parents.
- We will continue to help parents feel connected to the high school by supporting our Grade Level Ambassadors to help organize, publicize and facilitate grade level participation and to develop innovative ways to engage our parents in both large and small group settings.
- Support the Reimagine Student Center committee and provide financial support
- We look forward to seeing everyone in the near future.