



# Cherry Avenue Buzz

## Principal's Message

Dear Cherry Avenue Families:

We hope you all had an enjoyable Thanksgiving and extended weekend. And we also wish you a happy Hanukkah and a very merry Christmas. We certainly have a lot to be grateful for at Cherry Avenue. Thank you to the parents for sharing your children with us and for all your support. We are also grateful to our PTA for all they do for the students, their families, and staff.

We provided 7 families with food for Thanksgiving, thanks to your support and care. We truly appreciate your generosity and thoughtfulness during the holiday season. The West Sayville Fire Department provided support to one family, as well. The Giving Tree will be up and running during Parent/Teacher Conferences for any families interested in taking a tag to support our families in need. All gifts must be received on or before December 16.

During November, students and their guests attended a breakfast honoring our veterans. Ms. Teufel, as always, did a phenomenal job hosting this brunch. Our veterans felt loved, respected, and recognized, as they always should! We also thank Ms. Woerner for adding a beautiful patriotic touch to the morning and to Ms. Votinelli for her hard work behind the scenes. PTA, thank you for creating posters for our very own Hall for Heroes; we loved seeing the beautiful photos of our service men and women, especially while they walked through the halls.

Our second annual Multicultural Festival was a huge success! PTA, thank you for helping us in recruiting families to host tables. Ms. Devore, thank you for your instrumental role, as well. Your partnership was invaluable. The following families were gracious enough to share their cultures with us during the evening event: Ms. Judy Duer (grandmother), The Raffetto Family, The Kleinhans Family, The Russo Family, The Shapiro Family, The Devore Family, The Gorton Family, The Reinoso Family, and Ms. Suchoboky for hosting an arts and crafts table. Ms. Teufel and Ms. Feramisco, along with Ms. Konstantatos hosted tables, as well. A great time was had by all and we look forward to next year's event!

Please remember that Cherry Avenue will dismiss at 11:10 a.m. on Wednesday, December 10 for K-5 parent/teacher conferences. UPK will run under normal hours. Please note that on those days, New Life and LEAP WILL NOT accept students. However, SCOPE will be in session.

**\*Parent/Teacher conferences for UPK only will take place on February 9 and February 10 (both days dismissing at 11:30 a.m.). K-5 have regular school hours on both these days.**

With the PTA Holiday Boutique event around the corner, as well as all types of shopping events (book fair, plant sale, etc.), we always want to support the decisions of each and every family. If you do not want your child(ren) shopping at any of these events, it is imperative that this information is shared with classroom teachers. From time to time students forget money and they shop regardless, putting things aside until they bring in money the next day. We want to avoid this from happening if any family is not in favor of this approach.

Spirit Week (voluntary) is taking place from Wednesday, December 17—Tuesday, December 23.

Wednesday, December 17:

**Candy Cane Day:** Wear red and white

Thursday, December 18:

**Grinch Day:** Wear green or Grinch attire

Friday, December 19:

**Deck the Halls:** Wear holiday bells/tinsel/lights, holiday socks, etc.

Monday, December 22:

**Ugly Holiday Sweater Day:** Wear your favorite holiday sweater

Tuesday, December 23:

**Holiday Pajama Day:** Wear your favorite PJs

(OVER)

December 2025

## Dates to Remember in December

P/T Conferences— 11:10 a.m. dismissal for K-5 only	10
PTA Holiday Boutique	11 & 12
Back-to-Basics "Homework"	11
BoE meeting @ SMS @ 7:30 p.m.	11
Report cards available via Portal	12
Giving Tree Gifts due	16
Spirit Week	17- 23



As cold weather is upon us, outdoor recess will continue to take place whenever possible. On those days, students will be going out regardless of dress. Please encourage your child(ren) to dress appropriately for winter conditions. If the wind chill (real feel) is 15 degrees or higher and weather permitting, outdoor recess will take place.

I have included three articles from the December 2025 edition of *Parents make the difference!* about a peaceful home environment, resiliency, and family dinners.

### **A Peaceful Home Environment Makes Learning in School Easier**

Today's students are facing high levels of stress and anxiety. When students struggle with their well-being, it can hinder their ability to focus, learn and perform at their best.

Here are some simple things you can do at home to support your child's mental and emotional well-being:

- Remember the big three: good nutrition, adequate sleep and exercise. These are the keys to overall wellness.
- Encourage laughter. Laughter should be a part of each day. Have everyone share favorite funny shows, movies, jokes and stories.
- Share good things. Every day, have each family member report one good thing that happened. Try to do this during a family meal and write down the responses in a family gratitude journal.
- Share stress-relief strategies. Teach your child to take deep breaths, go for a walk or turn on some relaxing music when feeling anxious or stressed.
- Stay organized. An organized, clutter-free home creates a more peaceful environment for everyone. It also teaches your child how to take care of belongings.
- Stay connected. Listen when your child shares concerns, and offer reassurance. If you become worried about your child, make an appointment with the pediatrician.

Source: R. Chatterjee, "Kids are back in school—and struggling with mental health issues," National Public Radio.

### **Are You Teaching Your Child to Bounce Back?**

Some families want to shield their children so they never have to experience failure. Others know that overcoming disappointments can teach children valuable lessons.

Are you helping your child learn from setbacks? Answer yes or no to the questions below:

- \_\_\_ 1. Do you give your child a chance to solve problems rather than jumping in to help right away?
- \_\_\_ 2. Do you encourage your child to think about what to do differently the next time?
- \_\_\_ 3. Do you lead by example? When you fail at something or make a mistake, do you talk about it and about how to fix it?
- \_\_\_ 4. Do you help your child keep disappointments in perspective? "You didn't ace your test, but you earned a higher grade than last time!"
- \_\_\_ 5. Do you remind your child that setbacks are usually temporary?

### **Routine Family Dinners Can Improve Outcomes for Children**

Families have varying schedules, and many wonder whether gathering for a family meal is worth the effort involved. In fact, research suggests that family meals can make a real difference.

Studies have found that kids who eat dinner with their families four or more nights a week are less likely to try cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana. They also perform better in school. To make family meals work for you:

- Let your child help with meal planning, grocery shopping or even simple cooking tasks. When kids are involved with preparing the meal, they're often more invested in eating it and joining the conversation.
- Include your child in mealtime conversations. Ask a few specific questions, such as, "Did anything surprise you today at school?"
- Keep it pleasant. Avoid using mealtime as an opportunity to argue or interrogate your child.
- Be flexible. If evening meals are hard to schedule, share breakfast with your child. You'll have the same chance to connect.
- Go low-tech. Turn off the TV and digital devices. Keep phones and tablets away from the table.
- Don't worry if you can't eat together every night. Try to have dinner together a few times each week.

Source: "Benefits of Family Dinners," The Family Dinner Project.

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On behalf of the entire staff, we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season! And of course, a wonderful, peaceful 2026, too!

Sincerely,  
Lisa Ihne, Ed.D.  
Principal

