Notes from the Principal

November ~ December 2019

National First Responders’ Appreciation Day ~ October 28
National First Responders’ Day recognizes the heroic men and women who put their lives on the line to keep us safe. At Kensico School, we welcomed first responders to join us for breakfast and to share their experiences with students by visiting classrooms. We had police officers, firemen, EMTs, a doctor, and 2 K-9 dogs join us for the morning. Students and staff enjoyed hearing about their jobs, their training and their experiences. Thank you to all our first responders for all you do to keep us safe!

Halloween at Kensico!
Halloween events started with our Haunted House Fundraiser organized by our P.E. staff on Thursday evening, October 24th. Every year, the Haunted House gets better and scarier!! Over 70 teachers and former students were involved, and the gym was transformed into one of the spookiest haunted houses in Westchester. Over 600 people went through the haunted house, and we raised $2,800 for the Kensico School PTA and Valhalla Schools Foundation! Way to go, Kensico!

The next night students had fun at the Monster Mash.
Luckily for us, the weather cooperated and we were able to have our annual Halloween parade on October 31st outdoors around our circle. The staff theme this year was winter, and Santa and his winter friends led the parade, followed by students in creative costumes, from princesses to dinosaurs to ghouls! A fun time was had by all!!

Student Council
Student Council representatives were elected by each homeroom (2 per class), and officer elections were held in October.
Officers for 2019/2020 are:
AJ Pesce, President
Roman Capobianco, VP
Gianna Capocci, Secretary
Andrew Pesce, Treasurer

Officers and Representatives were sworn into office by George Latimer, Westchester County Executive, during his visit to Kensico on October 30.
Book Fair ~ November 6, 7 & 8
Our Book Fair will be held on the gym stage, courtesy of Main Street Books in White Plains. Students will visit the Book Fair with their class. The Book Fair will be open to families on November 7th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Please come visit with your family! A special thank you to Ammie Hart and Corinne Strome for organizing the Book Fair and the many parent volunteers for assisting students on both days.

Veterans' Day Assembly ~ Friday, November 8 ~ 9:30 a.m.
We are honored to welcome members of the Valhalla American Legion Adolph Pfister Post 1038, led by Commander John J. Creskey. The veterans will answer students’ questions, describe their service to our country, and perform a flag folding explaining what each fold means. After the assembly in the gym, we will go outside for a flag raising ceremony. We thank these veterans and all veterans and members of the military for their service to our country.

Third Grade Parent Visitation Day ~ Wednesday, November 13 1:00 to 2:15 p.m.
Third grade parents are invited to visit Kensico to experience their child’s home away from home. **Reminder:** No young children or strollers. They interfere with the academic flow of a lesson.

Fourth and fifth grade teachers will invite parents at other times. Check with your child’s teacher to learn what they have planned. The dates are on the calendar on our website.

Author Visit ~ Laurie Friedman ~ Thursday, November 14
Laurie Friedman is the author of over 50 award-winning picture books, chapter books, and novels for young readers, including the bestselling Mallory McDonald chapter book series, The Mostly Miserable Life of April Sinclair teen journal-format series, and many rhyming picture books, including the Ruby Valentine series. Laurie’s books can be purchased at the Kensico Book Fair on November 6, 7 and 8. Any book purchased at the Book Fair will be signed by Laurie when she visits our school. In conjunction with our monthly writing celebration, ten lucky students will be chosen to have lunch with Laurie Friedman! See details in the Writing Celebration section of this newsletter.

Family Reading Night ~ Thursday, November 21 ~ 7:00 p.m.
This activity is sponsored by the Valhalla Schools Foundation. The theme for our Family Reading Night is "Science Fiction". Come join the Reading Night gang for a night of games, crafts and reading activities. The first 30 families that submit their flyers will be called. Please remember, this is a family event. We ask that all families come with their own children. Look for flyers in your child's backpack.
5th Grade Trip Franklin Mineral Museum ~ Mon., November 25
Franklin Mineral Museum is a hands-on science museum focusing on geology, mineralogy, and archaeology. Students will participate in a rock dig and will be able to keep 2 lbs. of collected rocks. The museum has a life-size mine replica, a fossil room, an Indian room (Native American), and artifacts. There are over 5,000 mineral specimens on display. This trip kicks-off the 5th graders’ upcoming science unit on geology titled, Rocks and Minerals.

Thanksgiving Recess
11:45 a.m. Dismissal on Wednesday, November 27
Schools closed Thursday & Friday, November 28 & 29
Thanksgiving Day in America is a time for offering thanks, family gatherings, and holiday meals. Happy Thanksgiving to all our Kensico families! Enjoy the break.

Toys for Tots
Kensico School will once again participate in the “Toys for Tots” program of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. Mrs. Gonzalez’ fifth grade class is organizing the drive. The program provides a bit of joy to abused, underprivileged and institutionalized children in Westchester County. The children are in the 0-18 age group.

If you would like to participate, please send in a new, unwrapped toy, and place it in our “Toys for Tots” box located in the lobby. We will be accepting toys after the Thanksgiving recess through December 6th. The toys will be picked up and distributed to needy children throughout Westchester County.

Tellabration! - TBD
For 30 years, the month of November has been filled with stories being told all over the world ~ an event called Tellabration! This year will mark Valhalla’s 21st Tellabration!, one of the few where all of the tellers are children. Our 4th and 5th grade storytellers have been working diligently crafting their stories. When they perform, they are not reading or reciting a memorized piece, but are truly telling their stories. There will be a wide variety of traditional folktales, adaptations of literary stories, and much more. Please come and join us for a wonderful evening of story!

4th Grade Journeys into American Indian Territory ~ Monday, December 9
This in-house field trip for our 4th graders will immerse students in the ways of life of Native Americans, past and present. Students will learn by doing, through activities that include putting up a teepee or building a wigwam, storytelling, Native games, arts and crafts, song and dance, and learning history from a Native American perspective. A key theme in the program is respect. Traditional stories and teachings show the importance of showing respect, stemming from one’s connection to other people (especially elders), animals, plants, and the earth we all inhabit. This is a wonderful learning experience for our students.
Holiday Shop ~ Monday & Wednesday, December 16 & 18
Our PTA is once again bringing the Penguin Patch Holiday Shop to school for students to do their holiday shopping! Shopping envelopes will be sent home, so parents can mark off which family members students can shop for and how much they are allowed to spend. Parent volunteers will be available to help students with their shopping. Many thanks to Ann Marie Penirelli for organizing the Holiday Shop!

Winter Wonderland Concert ~ Thurs., December 12 ~ 7:00 p.m.
Music teachers, Dr. Laura Evans and Mr. Ed Rossi, will host our Winter Wonderland Concert. Please join us for an evening of cheer with a focus on music and celebration of student talent.

Auditorium Etiquette: Please stay seated until the end of the concert, and keep younger children seated with you. Please turn cell phones and other electronic devices off during the performance. Remember to maintain quiet in the bleachers – it is not a basketball game. No food or beverages are allowed in the gym. Your children have asked me to remind you of these rules, since they find the unnecessary noise and movement distracting. As always, thank you for your cooperation.

Friday, December 20 ~ Day of Tradition
This last day of school for 2019 will focus on how families celebrate the holiday season. Whatever your family tradition may be, it’s worth sharing.

December 23 to January 6 Holiday Recess
We wish all our families a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Joyful Kwanzaa, and Happy New Year! Schools reopen Monday, January 6, 2020.

Cell Phone Policy
Technology and busy families have increased the need for some children to bring cell phones to school. This is understandable; however, cell phones must remain off and out of sight during school hours. We have had increasing occasions when parents have called or texted their child during the school day interfering with the learning process and disrupting classroom activities. We know it may be important for your child to have a cell phone to communicate with you before and after school; however, if your child must reach you during the school day, a phone call can be made from the main office. In addition, please note that the school is not responsible for lost or misplaced phones. Please remind your child of this policy.

Happy Birthday!
Joseph Candrea
Estella Castellano
Isabella Colon
Matthew Costa
Pamela Feliciano Pani
Marcos Freire
Patina Garrett
Lola Grabell
Ava Keriazis
Valeria Martinez-Orozco
Aniela Mascia
Dominic Pesello
Jonathan Ramos
Andrew Reyna
Zain Shafi
Olivia Smallwood
Monthly Writing Celebration
A big thank you to all who participated in the September Writing Celebration!

Mrs. Astrella
Lucia Gupta
Valentina Marone

Mrs. Floryshak
Valerie Castillo
Vinnie Fragoso
Kayla Jenkins
Michael Robson
Kaitlyn Valdovinos

Mrs. Walter
Max Buonocore
Davin Geller
Maxwell Kwan
Valeria Martinez
Joseph McLaughlin
Aubrey Voetsch

Mr. Wright/Ms. Bilt
Jeremy Fleiss
Gabriella Oliveira
Tomas Signes

Mrs. Frank:
Vivien Keppler
Alex Nagorny

Romano:
Kaden Chaudhry
Hannah Konigsberg
Lilianna Rubino

Mrs. Williams
Anika Gursahini
Joshua Thomas

Mrs. Petriccione/Miss H
Antonella Angeles
Matthew Costa
Martina Falco
Alex Gjeci
Adriana Hernandez
Gabrielle Hickman
Justin Koehler
Keelan Mahon
David Perri
Kevin Strome
Emma Wang

Mrs. Trehy
Serena Buonocore

October:
We are excited to see what our writers are crafting for our October writing celebration and author visit! Laurie Friedman, author of the bestselling Mallory McDonald series will be visiting Kensico in November. To prepare for her visit, we are asking students interested to read one of her many chapter or picture books. After reading, we would like you to craft a letter to Laurie that will be hand delivered to her! In the letter, we want you to share why you enjoyed the book, who your favorite character is and why, and ask her any questions you are interested in knowing about her being a writer. Ten lucky students who submit entries will be chosen to have lunch with Laurie. Entries are due Friday, November 8th.

November:
Thanksgiving is quickly approaching. It's the time of year when we reflect on what we are thankful for in our family, school, and community. To help celebrate Thanksgiving this year, Kensico is teaming up with Senator Pete Harckham’s "What are you thankful for?" writing task. Students are asked to be creative, but also to convey why or how they show their thanks for the people and things in their lives. Submissions can be a poem, an essay, or piece of artwork expressing their ideas. We are also asking students to submit this online in jpeg or pdf format to harckham.nysenate.gov. Entries are due to school, and should be uploaded by November 25th if you would like to submit them online. We can’t wait to hear and celebrate all of the wonderful things we are thankful for!
A Message from Mrs. Branciforti

**Physicals:** All new students to our district and 3rd & 5th grade students are required by NYS law to have a current physical examination on file. Please send a completed medical form to the Health Office by **November 1st**. If your child had a physical within the past year (after **September 5, 2018**), they do not need to be re-examined, just send a copy of the report to the nurse's office. If your child has an upcoming appointment with his/her health care practitioner, please contact me with that date.

**Vision and Hearing:** All students have been screened for vision and hearing if not screened already by a physician. A referral letter has been sent home if there is a discrepancy or new impairment finding from the prior year's screening. Please return the referral letter to the Health Office upon completion of your child's follow-up visit with the pediatrician/ophthalmologist/audiologist so his/her health record can be updated.

**Attendance:** Attendance is taken daily by 9:00 a.m. The automatic electronic attendance call system is activated daily at 9:10 a.m. In order to ascertain the safety and medical status of your child, please call the Health Office prior to 9:00 a.m. to report an absence or lateness. Communication is key to maintaining your child's health, wellness and safety. All illnesses are tracked for potential health problem events which may affect Kensico School. Upon return to school from any absence, a note is required from the parent/guardian or medical physician (*if absent more than 3 days*) indicating the reason for the absence. As per the district attendance policy, once your child has seven unexcused absences/tardies, a letter will be sent home.

**Medication:** As per NYS law, all over-the-counter medication, nonprescription medications, homeopathic remedies, and prescription medications must be brought in with a doctor's prescription and parental permission to be administered in the school. No cough drops/medicated lollipops are allowed to be administered or taken by the child during school hours. Please refer to the District Website under Health Office to download the District's Medication Administration Form if your child requires medication at school. Return the completed form to the Health office with the medication in the original packaging.

**Clothing:** Sometimes students are given a change of clothing in the case of an emergency, spill, etc. Please take care to wash the clothing provided to your child and return them at your convenience via your child's backpack! I am in need of clean or new underwear to keep on hand in case of emergencies. If you have extra at home, please send to school.

**Food Allergies:** Please abide by the VUFSD Peanut/Nut Free/ Foods Processed in a Facility that has Tree Nuts/Peanuts Policy. All food brought into the building for a celebration must contain the INGREDIENT LIST of each product used, and store bought only, the ingredient list must be attached to the food item. Please send all food items in its original packaging for easier ingredient assessment. Remember, all Kensico classrooms remain Peanut/Tree Nut free! Thank you for your assistance and diligence in this pertinent matter!

**Check out my website for monthly health updates.** [Nurse's Corner](#)

Please feel free to contact me during school hours with any questions or concerns you may have in regards to your child. Thank you!!