

PS 11'S HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Spring has sprung and our ecological educators are busy getting our garden ready to grow! Garden Committee Co-Chair Nicole Halsey sat down with Nature Based educators Josephine Quiocho, Fred Wolf and Jinky Nogales (featured here from left to right) to hear some of their thoughts...

What is your favorite thing about working with students in the garden? *Jo: The crunch of dried leaves under little feet, the*

sounds of shrieks and laughter over jumpy worms, the looks of awe and wonder at a Monarch butterfly warming its wings, the breathtaking sighs and surprise over nature surrounding us in our little garden oasis. But mostly I

love the smiles that follow a freshly pulled radish, followed by a slight nervousness and hesitation while I wash and clean it, the scrunched up noses upon the first taste, and finally a shrug of the shoulders and a boisterous disclaimer, "Farmer Jo, it wasn't even that bad!" (heart melts).

What do you think students find the most surprising about agriculture and life science? *Jinky: I think students are surprised by the fact that certain things we eat, like fruits and vegetables, actually grow in a garden, not a grocery store. Students are also amazed by all the different organisms that help the garden thrive...they're less afraid of worms, bees, and other critters knowing that they are part of their garden community.*

What's in store for the garden this spring? *Jo: I'm hoping to incorporate lots of beneficial native plant species into the garden to support our native pollinators. This will allow students to experience their role as environmental stewards, promoting healthy ecosystems and thereby securing our own human needs. I'm also hoping for lots of seeding, watering, harvesting, and of course EATING...right from the garden!*



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

While our approach to academics at PS 11 is rigorous we also know how to have healthy fun. Our annual spirit week creates an energized environment that recharges our students and guides our upper grade students into a successful state exam testing week. We recognize that state exams can create a feeling of uncertainty and even anxiety in some of our students. This year as part of our Saturday academy we are piloting a four part mindfulness series to provide students with additional resilience skills. Our wellness initiatives have been all encompassing. In this issue we share with you the breadth of the council's work to date. I could not be more proud of our growth as a community.

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WHAT'S GROWING



Last year, PS 11's garden committee secured a mini grant from Grow to Learn NYC to build a three compartment compost bin. The bin will be used by students and parents to provide super rich compost to the garden this spring and summer.

Grow to Learn NYC, the Citywide School

Gardens Initiative, was established in 2010 as a public-private partnership between GrowNYC, the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, and several government agency partners, with a mission to inspire, promote and facilitate the creation of sustainable gardens in public schools throughout New York City.

Look out for details about how you can be involved in helping to bring compostable items in each week for the bin. We'll be looking for volunteers to help weigh contributions and check that items are appropriate for composting, as well as volunteers to help keep our garden produce thriving all summer long!



SEASONAL RECIPE

Another sensational spring recipe from Allergic to Salad, our nutrition education partner leading our culinary class as part of Behan Arts Academy.

SPRING PEA-RICOTTA CROSTINI



Serves 4

- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1 cup green peas (frozen thawed or fresh)
- zest of 1/2 lemon
- 1/4 cup ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup fresh grated Pecorino Romano or Parmesan
- 1/4 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves (plus more for garnish)
- 1/4 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 baguette, sliced into 1/2-inch
- cherry tomatoes, halved (for garnish, if desired)



Instructions: Prep and combine garlic, green peas, lemon zest, ricotta, cheese, basil, mint, olive oil and salt in a food processor (or hand-powered blender). Pulse until well combined.

Slice baguette, top with a heaping spoonful of Pea-Ricotta spread. Top with a halved cherry tomato, if desired, or a sprinkle of fresh cut basil.

Note: You can skip the baguette and enjoy this with pita or flatbread. It would also be delicious as a ravioli or stuffed pasta filling!

WHOLE SCHOOL WHOLE CHILD WHOLE COMMUNITY

School Wellness Councils (SWCs) are charged with developing practical, innovative ways to address all components of wellness for the whole school community. Here SWC member Anna Collette recaps our efforts since the council's inception last spring:

- Worked with the Office of Food & Nutrition Services to re-institute our school salad bar.
- Collaborated with class parents and school administration to establish a healthy celebrations and healthy rewards policy aimed at limiting the amount of high sugar, high sodium & high fat foods served in the classroom.
- Partnered with Allergic to Salad, Beecher's Foundation and Garden to Café to bring a variety of culinary and nutrition education opportunities to PS 11.
- Secured four grants and a private donation totaling over \$20,000 which have collectively funded: cooking equipment for our new culinary arts classes; the development of a new hands-on nutrition education class for 1st and 2nd grades (which will be expanded into a comprehensive agriculture & life science curriculum spanning all grades over the next 2 years); and social and emotional programming for both students and caregivers.
- Developed an indoor recess plan to keep our students active during inclement weather days, and worked with staff to reinforce that recess should not be withheld as group punishment.
- Received *Move-to-Improve* All Star Status from the NYC Department of Education.
- Hosted our first *Get Off Your Apps* night of wellness activities for the whole family.
- And launched the Wellness Quarterly you're reading right now!

KIDS CORNER

STUDENT GOVERNMENT HARD AT WORK!

We interviewed PS 11's newly elected student government on their plans to launch a mobile healthy snack cart this spring...

Where did the idea for a mobile healthy snack cart come from?

A lot of students don't like the school lunch and they only get on line for the snacks, so they throw the food away which is a waste.

What is your idea of a healthy snack? *Healthy snacks are things like fruits and vegetables...snacks that don't give you heartburn and have no artificial ingredients...Healthy snacks are low in calories and low in sugars. No offense to anyone but we do have to watch out about getting fat!*

How will you decide what items to sell? *We plan on doing a student poll to see what our friends will like the most"*



Left to Right: Tseday Williams (President), Paige Johnson (Vice-President), Khalil Washington (Treasurer), & Kimora Jackson (Secretary)

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is an immensely powerful tool and is very simple to do, even for children. Defined as the “awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally”, mindfulness can help children foster a sense of curiosity, self-compassion, and awareness of their psychological and physical experience of the world. Here are two ways to implement mindfulness into your daily routine:

1. Turn your walk to school into a "walking meditation". As you walk with your child down the street, ask them to bring their focus to their feet: What does it feel like to have your foot suspended in the air versus touching the ground? Is your entire foot ever touching the ground all at once? You can also invite your child to explore their five senses when moving from one place to another: What do they see, hear, touch, and smell in one environment compared to another? What kinds of feelings do those elements of the physical environment bring to mind?

2. Connect to breath at bedtime. Breathing exercises can calm the sympathetic nervous system and engage the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps us feel relax and restored. At bedtime have your child inhale through their nose for 4 slow counts and exhale through their nose for 8 counts. Repeat 10 times (or more). They can also try using a “breathing buddy,” which can be any object they find comforting, from a stuffed animal to an eye pillow. They can place their breathing buddy on their tummy while lying down, and watch it rise and drop as they practice the breathing exercises.

Hannah Sherman, LMSW, Therapist & Mindfulness Educator

CALENDAR

APRIL 12

8:45 am - 11:15 am

5th Grade Pure Food Kids
Nutrition Education Workshop

MAY 8

5:30 - 8 PM Talking About Race
for Parents: Reference school
calendar for details

MAY 11

Brooklyn PTA 5K Run/Walk
Prospect Park email
ps11swc@gmail.com to join our
team .

MAY 14 & MAY 21

Parent Workshop: Bullying
Awareness: Reference school
calendar for details

MAY 16

5:00 pm - 6:00 PM Library
LAST School Wellness council
meeting of the school year -
all are welcome!

WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS

Our monthly themed school wide
topics on healthy living ▶▶▶▶▶▶

Special thanks to
our master trainers Ms.
Fullerton and Ms. Williams for
making PS 11 a Move-to-
Improve All Star School !!!

The SWC is pleased to
announce that PS 11 was
awarded a Grow With Us Grant
from New York Agriculture in
the Classroom.



APRIL

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. A balanced breakfast has one grain, one vegetable OR fruit and one dairy OR protein food-group item.



MAY

We need water to stay hydrated and to help our brains function well. We can add orange, lemon or cucumber slices to provide a nice flavor to our water.



JUNE

Healthy snacks can provide our bodies with important nutrients to give us energy between meals. A good rule is to choose snacks from the five food-group foods.