

## PS 11'S HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Alvin Ailey dance; Classroom Fit & Play; creative dance & movement; enhanced recess programming with dedicated fitness coaches; a robust selection of after-school sporting classes; and an academic-based physical education curriculum focusing on the systems of the body -- PS11's commitment to physical education keeps everyone on their toes!



### A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

For the second year in a row, PS11 has outperformed all other elementary schools in District 13 on the New York State exams. An impressive 78% of our students achieved Level 3 or 4 in ELA compared to the district average of 52%. Similarly 74% of our students achieved Level 3 or 4 in Math compared to a 48% district average. While some may attribute our students' success solely to PS11's academic rigor, the importance of a well-balanced learning environment cannot be overlooked. In this issue we will share with you some of the exciting new initiatives that strengthen our ongoing commitment to creating strong minds and strong bodies.

Back in 2015, PS11 was one of only five schools in NYC to participate in the

Department of Education's pilot program to provide full-time "recess coaches" to ensure active and respectful outdoor play. Now in its third year, our enhanced recess program -- led by youth services company *It Takes A Village* -- ensures that our students are making the most of their

daily 20 minutes of physical activity and cooperative play. We have also recently developed a new indoor recess plan to keep our students physically active during inclement weather in the winter months.



As the temperatures continue to drop, the Wellness Council is heating up with exciting initiatives for the 2018-2019 school year! By January 2019, at least 85% of our teachers will be trained in Move-to-Improve, a

classroom-based physical activity program developed to enhance learning while moving. We also debuted our first ever "Get Off Your Apps" night of family fun, fitness, cooking, healthy snacks, and wellness activities -- a hugely popular event which we'll definitely be repeating!

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# WHAT'S GROWING



The students in Ms. Frohlich's pre-k class have been busy growing something new! Kombucha is an ancient health drink made by fermenting sweet tea within a culture of yeast and bacteria. It's

loaded with B vitamins and probiotics, aka the "good bacteria" that are helpful for your body.

The students "grew" their kombucha using tea, sugar, and a SCOBY -- a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast known as the kombucha "mother". A single SCOBY can create an infinite supply of kombucha; it creates a continuous cycle that lasts as long as the kombucha maker uses it.



The kombucha in G-28 has now taken on a life of its own! Not only are four year olds successfully creating a drink that takes most adults a lifetime to master -- they are learning concepts of measurement, ratio, life cycles, and sustainability. They are also witnessing firsthand the importance of organic ingredients, and the health and environmental benefits of making things from scratch.



# SEASONAL RECIPE

This fabulous winter recipe is brought to us courtesy of Allergic to Salad, the nutrition education partner who leads our culinary class as part of Behan Arts Academy.

## KALE AND WHITE BEAN CURRY

Serves 8

- 1 tablespoon olive oil or coconut oil (recommended)
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon minced ginger
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 4 oz tomato sauce
- 1 ½ tablespoons curry powder
- 1 13.5 oz can light coconut milk
- 2 cups kale, roughly chopped
- 15 oz white kidney beans, drained and rinsed



Heat oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy saucepan over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add



the onion and cook, stirring frequently, for 4-6 min, or until soft and translucent. Stir in the garlic and ginger, then continue stirring until fragrant, about 1 min. Stir in the sweet potatoes, tomato sauce, and curry powder and continue stirring for 10 min or until the potatoes begin to soften.

Add the coconut milk, kale, and beans to the pot. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 20 min, or until the potatoes are soft and completely cooked through. Serve over rice or your favorite hearty grains and enjoy!

# DRESSING FOR WINTER RECESS SUCCESS

Winter is upon us -- but keeping kids cooped up inside can take a toll on their health, mood *and* academic performance. The myth that cold weather causes colds is just that -- a myth! Believe it or not, indoor air actually exposes your child to more viruses and bacteria during the winter cold and flu season. Meanwhile, outdoor play boosts your child's creativity and problem-solving skills, and allows them to connect with nature and with their friends. Regular exercise improves sleep (something on top of *every* parent's holiday wish list) and increases children's ability to handle physical and emotional challenges -- from running to catch a bus to studying for a test. Exposure to a mere 15 minutes of sun provides your child's daily dose of vitamin D, critical for healthy bones, mood management, and overall health.



So how cold does it have to be for recess to be moved indoors? The NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene strongly encourages principals to move recess indoors only when the forecast calls for continuous rain, ice or snow on the playground, a wind chill creating an effective temperature of zero degrees or below, or other extreme weather conditions (high winds, hurricane warnings, lightning, etc.).

So bundle up your child with lots of layers, and be sure to pack gloves or mittens, a hat, and a scarf or neck-warmer. It is also recommended that children with asthma, have an asthma action plan that lists weather triggers, and ways to manage them. PS 11's fabulous coaches and staff will be keeping our kids healthy, active, and outside as much as possible, all winter long!

*Courtesy of pediatrician, Brooklyn mom, and PS 11 parent MaryAnn Edgehill*

## KIDS CORNER REIMAGINING CELEBRATIONS!

Can you imagine classroom celebrations *without* store bought cupcakes and boxed fruit juices? Well that's exactly what happened when the parents of Class 3-217 threw a Hawaiian-themed smoothie party for the November birthdays! Kids enjoyed fresh smoothies made with fruits, coconut water, and **no** added sugars. Based on the photos it looked like healthy fun for all. Aloha!



# CONSCIOUS PARENTING

There's been a lot of talk about "conscious parenting" over the past few years, but what exactly does that mean, and how does an over-stressed (and under-slept) parent do it? Here are two principles of conscious parenting you can put into effect *now*:

**Practice accepting your kids just as they are.** This is much tougher than you might think, as so much of what we want for our kids can be rooted in our own fears and ego. But when we successfully remove the expectations of this "fantasy child", we create space and acceptance for who our child *actually* is in this moment. This in turn gives the child the space to flourish as an individual and to learn self-acceptance and self-worth.

**Talk openly about emotions with your kids.** It is imperative that we as parents normalize emotions for our children. Emotional expression is normal and healthy; finding appropriate and constructive means of expression is... challenging! The upside is that this means you're allowed to express your own feelings of anger, sadness, and frustration around your child -- whenever you lose your cool, use it as a jumping off point for a conversation about feelings, and remind your child that they have the powers inside them to navigate everything that comes their way.

*Courtesy of Mindfulness Instructor Stefanie Tocco of Internal Beings*

# CALENDAR

## JANUARY 3

5:30-7:30pm

Parenting Workshop: Raising Caring, Compassionate Children with Habits of the Mind

## JANUARY 10

5-6pm

School Wellness Council meeting, All are welcome!

## FEBRUARY 7

5-6pm

Mindfulness and Parenting Practices. Attendance for caregivers interested in signing their kids up for the March series is highly recommended.

## MARCH 9, 16, 23, & 30

12:30-1pm

FREE Behan Mindfulness four-part series for students in Grades 3-5. Registration opens in Feb; limited to 30 students.

## WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS

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

The SWC will introduce FREE mindfulness classes for our teachers, parents & students starting in the New Year! This offering was made possible by a generous donation of \$10,000 from a PS11 Supporter!



## DECEMBER

Remember to eat at least 1.5 cups of fruit a day! Enjoy a rainbow of colors, and benefit from fiber & vitamins that keep us healthy & strong.



## JANUARY

Kids should eat 4-6 servings of grains per day. Always look for whole grain options without added sugars.



## FEBRUARY

Two daily servings of protein help our muscles grow strong! Eggs, beans, and nuts are protein-packed vegetarian options.