



Hackensack Public Schools

# Newsletter



## *Superintendent's Message*



This year's winter solstice began yesterday, Thursday, December 21 at approximately 11:28 am. Growing up, my father would say, "It's the shortest day of the year." As a child who interpreted things very literally, I had a difficult time understanding how the day was "shorter" - when it still had 24 hours in it. How could it be shorter? According to the Farmer's Almanac, the winter solstice is the day with the fewest hours of sunlight in the whole year." The word *solstice* comes from Latin *sol* "sun" and *sistere* "to stand still." So, although the day is still 24-hours long, the winter solstice reminds us that it's OK to slow down and enjoy an earlier sunset (4:32 PM on December 21). In nature, many animals and plants hibernate or go dormant to get through the frigid cold and stress of winter. They "slow down" or "stand still."



At school, our students and faculty prepare for winter break. Beyond looking forward to a break from school, students, staff and teachers prepare for some "down time." Much like nature benefits from "standing still," we can all benefit from taking time to slow down... Maybe we'll consider making more time for family and friends... Or perhaps, we'll make time to go for a long walk outside? Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanza, Three King's Day, or another special day, we wish you a wonderful holiday and a relaxing winter break. May 2018 be a happy, healthy and peace-filled New Year for all

~Rosemary Marks,  
Acting Superintendent

**WINTER 2017/18**  
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## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**December 22nd**  
12:30pm Dismissal  
Students and Staff

**December 26th-January 1st**  
Holiday Recess  
(School Closed)

**January 15th**  
MLK Jr. Day  
(School Closed)

**January 23rd**  
BOE Regular Meeting—7:30pm



## Fairmount School

### *Flexible Seating at Fairmount School*

Mrs. Scordo, a first grade teacher at Fairmount School, is using flexible seating this year in her classroom. The benefits of flexible seating are great because the classroom is set up to make it more student-centered. Children can walk into her classroom and find a comfortable spot to work on centers, listen to a whole group instruction lesson or read independently. Many children enjoy having a special spot for reading. Students in this first grade class choose a place to work, and they can switch throughout the day as long as they are doing their very best work and are not interfering with the work of others.

When children move around throughout the day, they have a chance to find a space that works best for them. Students are able to choose a stability ball, a bean bag, a wobble chair or they might like a comfy floor seat. They choose a "just right" spot for them. Mrs. Scordo's first grade students walked into their classroom on the first day of school this year and couldn't believe their eyes. They keep saying, "We have the coolest classroom in our school!"

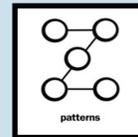
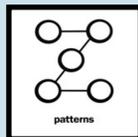
Flexible seating fosters independence and decision making. Mrs. Scordo and her students are extremely happy they are able to use this seating to grow as learners this year.



# Fanny M. Hillers School

## *Depth and Complexity Science at Hillers School*

Mrs. Heerema’s first grade students at Hillers School are learning all about objects in the sky in their science unit. Here they are, working as scientists, using the Depth and Complexity icons; Language of the Discipline and Patterns, to observe and record the position of the sun in the sky at different times during the day.



# Jackson Avenue School

## JACKSON AVENUE SCHOOL

### Jackson Parent Academy

Our Parent Academy continues to grow in popularity! On November 30, families took on the Cardboard Challenge and built houses that could withstand the force of powerful winds! Free childcare and homework help was provided while parents learned valuable strategies about how to improve their child's vocabulary!

### PTA Fall Festival

Jackson Avenue families enjoyed hours and hours of fun with Carnival Games and a petting zoo! Hackensack High School students were on hand to manage the games and entertain the kids!

### Mindfulness at Jackson

Our teachers continue their training in mindfulness. Staff attended a seminar on the impact of distress in the classroom. Our goal is to empower teachers to create safer learning environments and teach to the **WHOLE CHILD!**

*Wishing our Jackson Families a happy and festive holiday season!*



## Nellie K. Parker School

### *"He Reads to Me"*

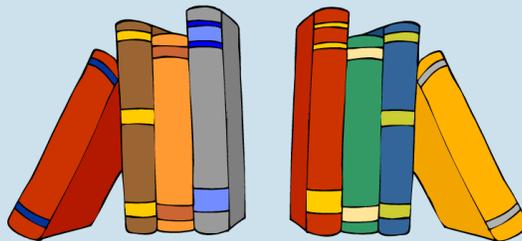
### *And the Winner Is...*

Congratulations goes out to the Hackensack Fire Department for sending the most Male Role Model Readers to Nellie K. Parker School during our day-long literacy event, "He Reads to Me." Male role model readers from all over the community are invited twice a year to visit classrooms and read stories to wide-eyed, enthusiastic students.

This event began several years ago when the Nellie K. Parker School principal realized a stark gap in male role model readers. "When I ask my students who reads to them at home, the overwhelming response is 'Mom reads to me'. I know dads share in the reading experience with their children. But I just don't hear about it enough. Knowing the impact a male role model can have on a child, I thought this was an important event to host" stated school principal, Ms. Lillian Whitaker.

This event has evolved into a competition between several organizations in the community. The organization that sends the most readers to Nellie K. Parker during the event is awarded the "He Reads to Me" banner until the next event. The Hackensack Police Department was the first recipients of the banner back in November 2016. They held on to the banner until December 7, 2017, when the Hackensack Fire Department showed up in strong numbers. By the end of the day, family and community support yielded about 50 guest readers!

*By Arlena Brinson-Jones*



# Hackensack High School

## Puerto Rico's Hurricane & Mexico's Earthquake Relief Collection at HHS

Hackensack High School's Spanish Honor Society and LASA (Latin American Students Association) collected items last month to send to the victims of Puerto Rico's Hurricane and Mexico's Earthquake.

The collection began on Wednesday, September 27 by members of both organizations who volunteered to help during homeroom until Friday, October 6. Items were packed in Room 307 by members of both SHS and LASA who separated them, packed, and marked the boxes.

All donations were divided into two groups. The donations were sent through various sources including the Paterson's Fire Department, The First Bergen Bank during the Hispanic Day celebration, LADA (Latin American Democratic Association) and we counted with the support of the Bergen County who had a drive at City Hall in Hackensack led by former Board Member Mr. Joseph Barreto, and the County of Bergen.



Puerto Rico y México son nuestros hogares también

Please help the Spanish Honor Society and Latin American Studies Association collect goods for Puerto Rico's Hurricane victims and Mexico's earthquake victims and deliver supplies needed to local organizations in 632 and 637

¿Qué pueden donar? ¿Qué necesitamos? We need:

- Non-perishable food
- Canned food
- Pain medicine, antiseptics cream
- Flashlights
- Batteries
- Soap/detergent
- Blankets/covers
- First aid kits
- Toilet paper, sanitary napkins, diapers, toothpaste, toothbrush/toiletries, etc.
- NO collecting money, clothes or shoes

PLEASE DROP OFF ALL DONATIONS IN ROOMS 601 OR 602 NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6.



# Extra News



## Making A Difference with the Interact Club

Interact Club members at HHS have been working hard to make a difference in our community! In just the last two months, Interact students have participated in an MDA Muscle Walk, planted flowers on the HHS campus, fed the homeless, made sandwiches for the needy, provided child-care services during parent workshops at Jackson Ave School, and have begun fundraising for the Club to support future community outreach activities. According to Maria Rivera, Advisor of the Interact Club, future plans include having student members teach seniors in the local community how to use technology and sending care packages to military personnel, stationed around the world.

The purpose of the Interact club is to do service work. In Ms. Rivera's words, "We just want the kids to smile and show others that they truly do care." One of the clubs newest members, says "kids who care sums up who we are."



# *Season's Greetings*



To Our Staff, Students and Families,



Best Wishes for a  
Wonderful Holiday and a  
Very Happy New Year!

