



Garden School Newsletter



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

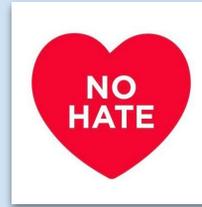
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"Cultivating Success in Every Child"

Friday, November 22, 2019

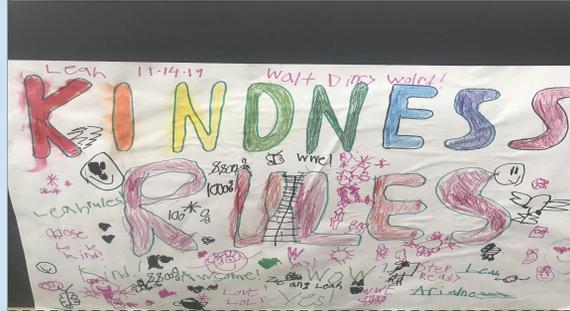
Thoughts for the Week

By: [Richard Marotta, Ph.D.](#),
Headmaster



Fifty-six years ago today, JFK was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. President Kennedy was visiting Texas to support Governor Connally and was riding in an open car when the assassin struck and with those shots American history was changed and the country was plunged into a collective shock. I was in high school at the time and remember vividly when our homeroom teacher, Brother Gabriel, came to our classroom (it was right after lunch) to tell us what happened. Shockwaves ran through our school, made all the more intense since Kennedy was the first and only Catholic President and now he was dead. We were sent home for the next several days as the nation prepared for the funeral. No one old enough at the time to understand what had happened will ever forget the photo of Lyndon Johnson being sworn in as president aboard Air Force One, as a blood-spattered Jackie Kennedy stood by, silently and mournfully watching.

For many of us, Kennedy represented a new direction, a youthful and optimistic approach to our culture and societal reform. For all of his mistakes, he inspired us to believe that we could face our issues head on by first acknowledging them and then by using our intellects and good will to discover solutions to poverty, racism, the challenge of the space race, and finally to energize our county with a ferocious optimism and hope.



Students in Mrs. Ahfeld's First Grade and Mrs. O'Sullivan's Eighth Grade class collaborate on making kindness posters.

As I was watching a brief retrospective about JFK, a news report flashed across the screen about the FBI's arrival on the Syracuse campus to investigate incidents of racism and potential racial violence. After a period of continual racist slogans, graffiti and internet chat, someone dropped a white supremacist manifesto into the Syracuse community; it was the same manifesto published by the shooter of innocent people in a

(Continued on next page----->)



Dates To Remember

Thursday - Friday, November 28 - 29 Thanksgiving Holiday (School is Closed)

Friday, December 6 - Pasta Night 6 - 8 PM (Senior Class Fundraiser)

Monday and Tuesday, December 9 - 10 - Holiday Boutique

Saturday, December 14 - Merit Exam & Open House

New Zealand mosque. This, of course, prompted the FBI to investigate, since this manifesto had been linked to mass murder.

It took place on a university campus in New York. A university should be and has been a place of intellectual safety, a place where divergent views can be debated and explored within the context of academic freedom and sensitivity. A university should not be an environment in which the worst of human thought asserts itself. Racism is an illegitimate result of a flawed thought process. Racism has resurged itself in the US and Europe. Throughout Europe incidents of anti-semitism, anti-Muslim, anti-foreigner and anti-gay rhetoric have been on the rise, with some really frightening results.

The great Albert Einstein and other significance thinkers of the early part of the twentieth century blamed the First World War in part on the intellectual community that failed to speak out against the nationalistic and empty boasts of the nation states. Einstein specifically specifically blamed the European school systems for passionately endorsing the idea of the glory of war. Julien Benda, a writer, in a book entitled *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, writes about the failure of the intellectual community to de-

nounce organized violence contributed to the disaster of the Great War.

Today, when I talk with other heads of schools, we talk about our duty and responsibility to denounce racism in all of its forms. The issues affecting the world at large need to be recognized and treated in the same way one would treat a disease. Racism is no different; racism is a disease that has afflicted humanity. President Kennedy declared a war on poverty; we have declared a war on drugs; we have declared a war on cancer; now let's declare a war on racism. It has no place in our schools; it has no place in our universities, and it has no place in our country. As teachers, as students, as parents, we need to recognize that racism won't disappear on its own. Our schools must become the antidote to this growing disease. President Kennedy said in his inaugural address, « Ask not what your country can do for you— ask what you can do for your country. » He was right. Our schools and our country need us to speak out against racism and provide the cure to a society that can be made whole if we make our voices heard.

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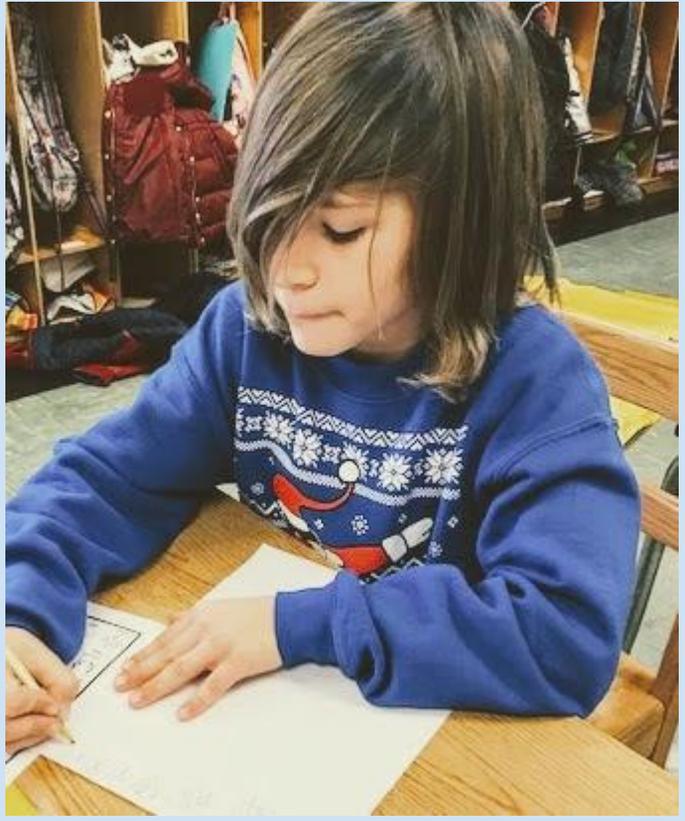


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“Horrific Horror Tropes!” By [Amira Esposito](#) (English Teacher)

After finishing our reading of the dystopian, anti-censorship novel *Fahrenheit 451*, the 10th grade has begun reading *Macbeth*. It immediately became clear through our in class reading of *Fahrenheit 451* that this is a class that thrives on the opportunity to “act a text out--” so naturally, the transition into Shakespeare has been a smooth one.

We transitioned into our reading of *Macbeth* by having an elaborate defining discussion about horror tropes and then identifying these tropes in the family-friendly Halloween classic film *Hocus Pocus* which centers on three witches. This provided an apt transition into *Macbeth*, which opens with and heavily features a group of three sister witches as well.

The 10th grade has eagerly immersed themselves both in acting out *Macbeth* as we read through the scenes in the play. Additionally, the unusually eager and enthusiastic 10th grade has been cultivating and presenting their own creative spin and vigor when “translating” the scenes of one of Shakespeare’s goriest tragedies into modern, more colloquial English. As we begin reading through and acting out the second act of the play, I look forward to seeing the 10th Grade’s creativity and innovation shine this year.

“Life as a Pilgrim Child” by [Rachel Vidal](#) (Third Grade Lead Teacher)

The third graders have been learning about the thirteen colonies in social studies. They have been very curious about why people left Europe for America. George asked incredulously, “Why didn’t they just get rid of the king?!” We discussed how people today are still emigrating to North America, and that some of the reasons are similar to the early colonists’ motives for leaving Europe. Learning about history is important for many reasons. History shows us models of good and responsible citizenship. It also teaches us how to learn from the mistakes of others. History helps us understand change and societal development. It provides us a context from which to understand ourselves and others.

Studying the thirteen colonies and learning about the commonalities and differences between the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies, the children were curious to learn why some settlers chose one area to settle in over another. In learning about the Pilgrims and the Puritans that settled in the New England colonies, they enjoyed reading about the Pilgrim children, specifically. They were horrified to learn that Pilgrim children had little to no say in what they did – the parents’ word was the law! They took great pleasure in the fact that today they have many more choices in their lives than Pilgrim children did. Our social studies project for the unit was to create a comic strip highlighting what life was like for Pilgrim children. Some focused on their daily chores (which were many!). Others enjoyed writing and illustrating the recreational side of Pilgrim life.

The third graders were surprised to learn that some of the games that the Pilgrim children played are still played today. Games such as “Nine Pin” (bowling) and “Naughts and Crosses” (Tic Tac Toe) were favorite games among Pilgrim children. When they learned that the children didn’t go school, but were taught by their parents, there was quite a mix of cheers and boos that could be heard from our classroom. These inquisitive third graders have kept the discussion during social studies lively and full of surprises.

Derivative Fundamentals and Polar Coordinates (But Not Polar Bears!)

by [Lauren Little](#) (Math Teacher)

AP Calculus

In our advanced placement calculus course, students face a daunting challenge - the AP exam. One main mathematical concept in calculus is the derivative. Mathematicians use derivatives to study rates of change whether it be a function or even an object moving, like the rate at which a balloon is inflating. Students have worked hard to master finding derivatives of functions. In the coming weeks, I'm excited that we've begun to apply this hard work to study characteristics of functions, such as where they're increasing, do they have local maximums or minimums?

Pre-calculus Honors

In our honors precalculus course, the students are studying polar coordinates. Up until now, students have only graphed in the rectangular coordinate system using points of the form (x,y) where x represents the horizontal movement from the origin and y represents the vertical movement from the origin. In polar coordinates, we use points of the form (r,θ) , where r is the distance from the origin and θ is the angle formed with the polar axis. The students learned the relationship between the two coordinate systems and how to convert between to two. Polar form is useful because some equations can be easier to work with in this form.

Mrs. Esposito's students dissect horror tropes in *Macbeth*.



“Here is my ‘Life as a Pilgrim Child’ project exclaims Isa.



Wampanoag Village in the Making by [Paula James](#) (Second Grade Teacher)

Welcome to our Second grade Wampanoag village! We are constructing a wetu (a Northeastern Native American housing structure) and writing stories using a Native American picture dictionary. As we work, we are learning about and comparing the features of the structures, clothing, and items used for chores and daily living in colonial times for each group. Some of our most interesting discussions have centered around taking a child's perspective of the native culture, and the immigrants. The children tried to imagine how it would feel being one, and then the other.

Over the past month, the students have been learning about immigration to North America over a span of about 400 years. We have read stories about modern and old-fashioned pilgrims and discussed the motivation for so many people to come to the United States. Students understood the hardships people faced in their home countries, and the difficulty of making the trip abroad. Our conversations also covered present day immigration and life in Jackson Heights. Our school resides in the most diverse community in the U.S., with so many different immigrant groups. Students enthusiastically shared stories about some of their family members that moved to America, and we used our map skills to identify the countries that they came from. We will close our unit with a family tree project and presentation that highlights the countries and traditions celebrated by families in second grade.

Pupils Explore Existentialist Literature in [Mr. Vallario's](#) Ninth Grade English Class

Ninth graders read Franz Kafka's novella *Metamorphosis* and uncovered themes that are present in Albert Camus's novel *The Stranger*. For example: absurdity, alienation, disparity, on the outside looking in, protection from the unknown, reality versus illusion, control versus powerlessness, change, loyalty, indifference, fear, physical emotions, mental emotions, free world versus unfree world, rebellion, non-conforming to societal expectations, etc.

By reading Camus's favorite author Kafka, students have a deeper understanding of the philosophy of the absurd and are able to come to critical conclusions. In addition, I presented a powerpoint on Camus's take on the *Myth of Sisyphus*, which also strikes a deeper understanding of *The Stranger*.

In addition, we screened the TV pilot episode of *The Good Place*, which provides human beings' actions with a point system when they are on earth, which determines if they will get into the "good" or "bad" place. We then discussed each character in *The Stranger* and came up with a system based from what we deem as morally correct and incorrect. Thus, enabling students to think more openly and logically regarding Camus's protagonist Meursault.

The students are drafting their thesis statements, which are due this Monday, and then they are to write a critical analysis of Camus's *The Stranger* after Thanksgiving break. With supplementary sources like *Metamorphosis*, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and *The Good Place*, the students are able to think outside of the box and have a larger understanding of what Camus's radical writing did during the 1940s, after, and today.



The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence becomes an act of rebellion.



Seventh and Eighth Graders Rock Out to Rolling Stones and the Beatles With [Mr. Heineman](#), Fine Arts Department Chair

7th Grade Music

7th graders tried to imagine what it might have felt like to be a teenager at that time and to have experienced the ferocious power of the Kinks' "All Day and All of the Night," creating both Hard Rock and Heavy Metal in a few strokes. Exploring the characters and themes in subsequent Kinks' songs such as 'David Watts' has led to some lively discussions and perspectives on history, as the bands' clever lyrics centering on outcasts and outsiders seem to deal with aspects of society that others choose to ignore (particularly in Popular music). The 7th graders also particularly enjoyed The Rolling Stones' "Paint it Black," another distinctive single from a British Invasion group (and Dr. Marotta's favorite band).



8th Grade Music

An overall goal for 8th grade students in music is to attempt to break away from their own cultural perspective and appreciate each culture they encounter from a fresh viewpoint. Traditional West African culture is fundamentally different from ours; it requires a change in thought, when born into Western culture, to attempt to understand many of the concepts underlying music from West Africa. For example, most of the languages in the region are tonal, so words have a pitch associated with them that communicates their meaning. It is almost unimaginable to our way of thinking, that variable pitch drums in West African music are often 'speaking' and expressing complex thoughts, understood by those that understand the native language.

Students have just begun to learn about West African music by breaking down and attempting to imitate one of its central rhythms (the bell/gong pattern). This coming week, they will have an opportunity to perform the patterns in a traditional piece of music in order to discover the independent, interlocking parts upon which the music is based. The integration of some of these concepts led to revolutions in popular music by James Brown, and the class will explore the incorporation of these traditional African ideas before unit's end.

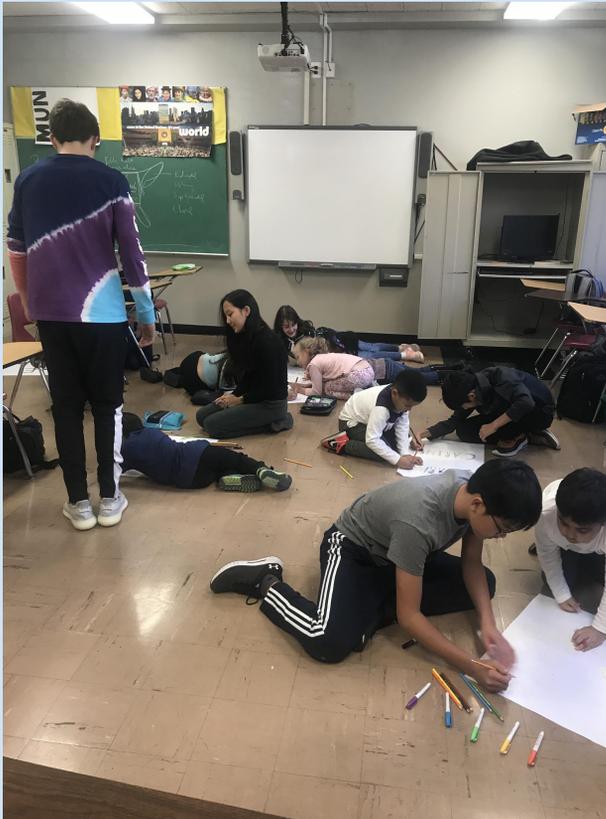
Mandarin Report:

First, Second and Third Grades By [Kelly Yang](#) (Mandarin Teacher)

The first through third grade students learned weather and season in Chinese. Our students can use appropriate words and phrases to identify weather and seasons and to share their preferences about their likes and dislikes related to weather and seasons. Students can also orally identify the seasons as well as in writing as they practice the characters for each. Third grade students will continuously recycle words, phrases and sentences they learned in previous lesson regarding weather, seasons and the calendar. They will learn to write characters of the four seasons 春 chūn spring、夏 xià summer、秋 qiū autumn、冬 dōng winter; and speak in complete sentences combining information about days, weather, and activities.



Volleyball with Our Middle School Students by Flance Dervishi



Kindness Initiative by [Kristen Ahfeld](#)

Part of the First Grade Social Studies curriculum at Garden School includes our kindness initiative



P.E. Report with Our Middle School Students by F lance Dervishi

In our PE class 4th 5th and 6th grade have been having a very competitive year so far especially in Nukumb and soccer we finished soccer 2 week ago, and crowned champions and given the students certificates. We have been playing tag game named, I have a dream which is Flag tag and it's been a blast. Now that we are in our soccer unit students are finishing up their regular season games and getting ready for the playoffs which will take place next week in a competitive tournament. All teams are equally spread with equivalent skill set and all classes compete for tournament champion. Soon tournament champion will be crowned and we will start preparing for our next unit which is basketball.



Kindness Initiative by [Kristen Ahfeld](#) (First Grade Teacher)

Part of the First Grade Social Studies curriculum at Garden School includes our kindness initiative. We teamed up with the Eighth Graders and made posters. Older kids can teach younger kids and younger kids can teach older kids. Can you find our kindness posters posted around the school? Snap a picture, post it on Instagram and tag [@gardenschoolNY](#).

7th and 8th Graders Show Off for Picasso by Chris Zelles (Art Teacher)

The 7th and 8th grade have just finished up their Picasso inspired Climate Change PSA's and the results are fantastic. These works of art will be on display in the upper division hallway next week. For their next project I have teamed up with one of our science teachers, Ms. Dapice, to do a biology themed project. For those who are not familiar with Bio Art, it is a practice where artist use a variety of mediums to replicate live tissues, bacteria, living organisms, and life processes. Our goal is for the 7th and 8th grade to have a more well rounded perspective on biology through art. Students will analyzing the techniques that Bio Artists Karen Kamenetzky and Jake McKinlay use, and then try to create their own original drawing using color pencils and black construction paper. The students seem very enthusiastic about the project and I look forward to seeing what these creative young artists come up with.

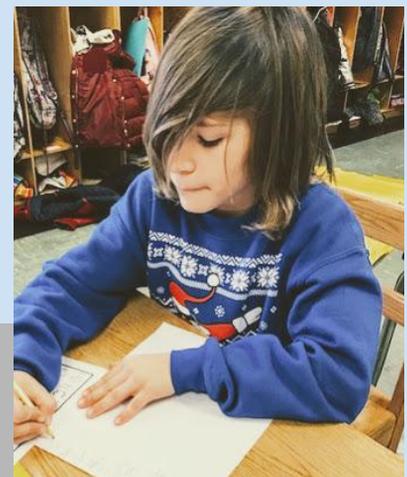


The artist are :
Noah Arnut
Sophia Berger
Theodora Reyes
Juliet Arau
Emely Figueroa





Can you put yourself in the shoes of Native Americans who lived in the world we today call the Americas? What would life have been like? These Second Graders can surely tell you.



Check out Mrs. James's Wampanoag Village in the Making by an Astounding Class of Marvelous Second Graders! Great, job!

Clockwise from Top left to bottom right: Raia, Mia, Buiar, Letti, Raia (again), and Eli.

