Dear MS 890 Family,

This time of the year is an exciting one. We look forward to holidays with families and friends. We gather to carry on the traditions that help to connect us to our past and to recognize the many sacrifices that were made by those that came before us.

This month, our school community’s focus is recognizing one another’s gifts and giving thanks for our diversity. As a school family, we want to ensure that everyone feels welcome at MS 890 and that each individual student understands their purpose and importance in making this world a better place. We can only achieve this goal by celebrating our differences, talents and unique self-worth.

School staff has begun professional learning around Culturally Responsive Teaching.

To be culturally responsive means to understand how our various cultural backgrounds influence the way we learn.

Each SPARK advisory cohort is decorating their classroom doors to celebrate different cultures’ contributions in each of the professional fields and content areas.

We also invite our families to join us in giving thanks for one another on Wednesday the 21st at our Multicultural Potluck Celebration. Feel free to share a traditional dish from your culture or home country and sample food from other cultures as well!

Thank you for your continued support. We appreciate you!

Sincerely,

Nicholas Frangella
Principal
Student Council

Our student council members meet once weekly to discuss key initiatives for school improvement. Pema Gurung, student council president, leads the meetings each week. Thanks to Mr. Murray for organizing this important group.

November Students of the Month

Congratulations to the following students who were recognized for their hard work, perseverance and dedication in their classes.

Kayla Aspervil – Class 601
Sheila Pichardo – Class 602
Stacie Au – Class 603
Chemir Banks – Class 604
Houseinanatou Diallo – Class 701
Arina Bazan – Class 702
Zunaira Ibrahim – Class 703
DeAvion Cox – Class 704
Rafael Zambrano – Class 119

Veterans Visit

On November 9th, students and staff wore red, white and blue to show support for our veterans of war. Students were visited by two marines, one who served in Iraq and the other who served in Vietnam. The veterans shared stories from the front lines and of the sacrifices they and their fellow soldiers made for our country. Students walked away with a greater appreciation and admiration for members of our armed forces. Thank you to Ms. Turner for organizing the event.

Breakfast with the Principal

On November 8th, over 40 7th grade parents attended breakfast with the principal event. Ms. Turner and Ms. Lopez, the guidance counselor and parent coordinator, were on hand to review the high school application process.
Korean Dance Residency

Spotlight Korea is a cultural enrichment program in which students learn Korean traditional music and dance from professional artists. The start date of the program at MS 890 is December 7th and students in Journalism 2.0 and STUDIO: Korean (grade 7) will participate in the program. Students will learn basic dance steps and music concepts as a way of understanding the influences of Korean history and culture taking root within dance and music. The 10 week long residency program will conclude with a final performance for a cultural event.

Professional Book Study: Learning About Culturally Responsive Teaching

This school year, all MS 890 teachers and instructional staff are reading the book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students* by Zaretta Hammond. Each month, teachers read a chapter and discuss the strategies in the book that will be implemented in the classroom. Thank you to Ms. Czirr and Mr. Sixta for planning and delivering this professional workshop!

6th Grade Visits Brooklyn Botanic Gardens

On October 26th, Mr. Sixta and the rest of the 6th grade students and staff visited the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Students learned about the world’s biomes to create their own biome brochure for social studies.
Science
In 6th grade, students will delve into how heat transfer can be minimized or maximized in the real world. Students will learn about the nature of heat transfer, and the various properties of materials which affect the transfer of heat through conduction, convection, and radiation. Students will engage in labs where they will investigate the properties of good conductors and insulators and connect how these materials are used in our lives. As an end of unit project, students will utilize their learning to design a model house to prevent heat loss. Students will justify why their design will be the most effective to prevent heat loss, then design their own experiment to support their claim.

In 7th grade, students will begin a new unit on changing properties of matter. In this unit students will develop models to explain how conservation of matter is characteristic of chemical change. Students will build on their knowledge from the previous unit in order to connect how matter and energy are linked while analyzing how they are built up and used within cells and the change that occurs in the process. Students will also have the opportunity to model and analyze the motion and rearrangement of particles in chemical reactions.

English Language Arts
In 6th grade, students are reading texts about exploration. Through novel excerpts, articles, and historical accounts, students are considering the legacies of famous explorers and discussing exploration’s role in the modern world. Later in the month, students will write blog posts modeled after mount-climber Samantha Larson’s To the Top of Everest and write argumentative essays about the future of the space program. Students are finishing our first class novel, Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis, utilizing “thinking routines” (based on Harvard University’s Project Zero protocols) to meaningfully and creatively respond to the text.

In 7th grade, students will begin to write a literary analysis essay on Salva’s character in A Long Walk to Water. Students will analyze Salva's characterization and discuss ways in which he was able to survive in a challenging environment. Students will focus on writing thesis statements, creating thoughtful claims about Salva, and using textual evidence to support those claims. With modeling by the teacher, outlines, and step-by-step instruction, students will organize a thoughtful essay.

Math
In 6th grade, students are focusing on how rates, ratios, and proportional reasoning can help us make sense of proportional relationships in the world around us. We explore real-world situations with quantities that relate to each other by multiplication, and use ratio language to describe the relationship between those quantities. Furthermore, we use models such as ratio tables, tape diagrams, and double number lines to represent proportional relationships between quantities. Using proportional reasoning and models, we will be able to solve various real-world problems by making comparisons between quantities and identifying ratios that represent the same proportional relationship.

In 7th grade, we will be focusing on our new unit, expressions and equations! Our main focus for this unit is to represent real-world scenarios using algebraic expressions or equations with one or more variables. Being able to represent quantities and relationships algebraically can help us make decisions in real-life. We will be focusing on the first and second step of our problem solving process; (1) Understand the Problem and (2) Create a Plan. When reading problems we are going to identify given and goals, which will allow us to understand the scenario, which will help us create and expression (which will be our plan). The skill we will be focusing on is simplifying algebraic expressions using numeric properties such as the distributive property and commutative property.

Social Studies
In 7th grade, students will be wrapping up their studies of Native American early encounters and colonial development. At this moment students are preparing for The People vs. Christopher Columbus courtroom role play project. Next, students will learn about the different colonies setup by the English and compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the geographic areas. As a class we will then move into Unit 2 The Road to Revolution. We will discuss how conflicts between France and Great Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries North America altered the relationship between the colonies and Great Britain. Students will understand that after the French and Indian War, the British Government enacted and attempted to enforce new political and economic policies in the colonies, and that this led to varied responses from the colonists including protests and dissent.

Music
Students in General Music have just finished their study of the two Beatles songs on The 10 Most Covered Song List by writing a letter to Sir Paul McCartney himself and expressing what they like about his songs “Blackbird” and “And I Love Her” using musical language and details. Next, students will embark on studying two new songs on the 10 Most Covered Song in History list that will introduce them to studying music in the music genres opera and jazz. Students will also take part in a music theory study of dynamics in music.
Musical History

Extra! Extra! Read all about it! This 6th Grade SPARK Class is going on strike for groups of workers! Ms. Russo and Mr. Cummings’s Musical History class is finishing up a Strike Project inspired by the Newsboys’ Strike of 1899 where they are created strike posters to go on strike in solidarity for a group of workers that they feel deserves better treatment. After that these Newsies in training will be moving on to a study of the Newsies allies both real and fiction, as well as study the outcome of the strike from a history standpoint. Students will continue to be “The King(s) of New York” as they prepare for their performance in the Winter Unity Concert this December!

Musical History 2.0

What a “Puzzlement!” Musical History 2.0 have identified problems that they see in The King and I and have created possible solutions. They will now closely analyze Act II of the musical in order to see which problems are solved and which are left unsolved. Students will also start thinking about their first format switch project! In the format switch project students will take a piece of The King and I and switch the format. A song may become a dialogue or a dialogue might become dance. The possibilities are endless as Musical History 2.0 embarks on creating their own small pieces of musical theatre. Musical History 2.0 is also preparing for their feature in the Winter Unity Concert this December!

Robotics

In 6th grade, students will be finishing the driver’s course. We will then work on using sensors to make our bots more autonomous. We will work on using the light sensor and ultra-sonic sensor first. Students will be able to detect color and have the robot react based on the color. Students will do work similar with the ultra-sonic sensor, which detects distance. MECS robotics students will be exploring space! Students are presented with different missions that represent space exploration with robotics. Students will design their robots that will be conducive to the “environment” and complete the missions autonomously. We will learn how space exploration happens using robots through our challenge and articles.

LOTE: Spanish

In Spanish we are continuing our work of engaging in basic, introductory conversations. Students are examining how Spanish speakers exchange information about where they are from, where they live, with whom they live, how old they are, and their professions. Central to this practice is the musical story Amnesia by Señor Wooly about a man who wakes up on an unfamiliar street surrounded by strangers. During this unit students are also becoming familiar with web-based platforms such as Quizlet and Señor Wooly as tools to learn and practice independently.

Sports Medicine

In November, students will begin learning the benefits of a nutrition plan and a rigorous exercise regimen. Students will explore the benefits of multiple food sources that they have been exposed to and how one’s diet choices can impact every other aspect of a person’s life in either a positive or negative way. Students will also explore the effect of exercise on the human body and how different forms of exercise can be necessary depending on the specific type of athlete. The students will then use this knowledge to construct a meal plan and exercise plan tailored to their favorite athlete.

LOTE: Korean

Students will learn new vocabulary and expressions related to school and student life for Unit 2. Students have just started learning to read and write Hangul vowels in additional to the consonants, and how they can be read and written in syllable blocks. Students will work in groups to create conversation dialogues to practice using the expressions we have learned so far in real-life situations. Students will also begin brainstorming topics and planning for Korean Culture and History Project.

Journalism

Sixth-grade Journalism students recently completed a neighborhood study project, creating poems, stories, articles, and presentations about their communities. This month, Journalism students are collaboratively writing articles about recent community events and topics of personal interest as we assemble our first print publication. Students are learning to research, write, format, and edit their own work for print and online publishing.

Journalism 2.0

This month in journalism, students are working on interviewing members of our school community for a “Humans of MS 890” project. Similar to the renowned “Humans of New York” blog, students will be interviewing people from our school in hopes of gaining insight into their life and what molded them into the people they are today. Through spoken interviews, podcasts, blog posts, etc., our students will be sharing the stories of students, teachers, administrators and staff members from our school community.

Food Science

Students will learn focus on how the industrialization and emergence of technological advances changed the food system, our health, the ecosystems, and the environment. This will lead to questions on the effect of technological advances and research on how our eating habits have changed and how they will change in the future. As a culminating project for this unit, students will conduct a food citizen action project where they will propose a solution for a food based problem they researched and find a solution for that problem.
Film Production

Students have recorded short skits that they put together and our big focus will be editing. We will be using an online video editing program to learn the basics of film editing. Students will analyze professionally edited films to understand how pacing and sound can influence a film. Students will also start keeping a weekly journal of editing techniques to help examine things that good editors do. In the coming weeks, students will watch parts of films to examine technique before the larger short film project they will get.

Future Cities

The SPARK Future Cities cohort have been planning, creating, and completing the early deliverables for the Future Cities project. The early deliverables include the City Essay and the Virtual City benchmark chart. The students are designing the Future City for the model build, which includes the concept of “scale”, and using their creativity to use our recyclable materials to create our model for the competition. As a request by the students of Future Cities, if you have any recyclable materials that you are not using in your household, we are accepting donations of water bottles, bottle caps, old CDs, egg cartons, and etc...Please deliver recyclables to Mr. Golembie in Room 504.

Urban Agriculture 2.0

This month in urban agriculture, students are working on an investigation into climate change. Students will read articles and investigate how climate affects our ability to produce food, organic food versus genetically modified organisms, and how can we meet the global demand for food. Students will then work on developing solutions to the agricultural problems that arise due to climate change. How will we be able to counteract the negative effects of a rising climate and population?

Blended Learning

In Blended Learning, student are continuing their work on Achieve3000 investigating new topics around the world. In the coming weeks students will also learn about online safety by evaluating the authority of websites and creating a presentation to share their knowledge about online websites. Students will begin keeping journal logs of their articles to engage in discussion and make connections between texts on a weekly basis.

Visual Art

Students in 7th Grade Visual Art have just finished their in-depth study of drawing, and have practiced different techniques, such as contour drawing and drawing from observation, to strengthen their drawing skills. They completed a variety of impressive projects, from a free-form, expressive "doodle project" to a still life from observation using line and shading. Through these diverse, hands-on artmaking experiences, the budding artists have begun practicing how to utilize the Elements and Principles of Art. Now, they are embarking on their unit on collage, an art form made from mixed media. Through a study of the work of artists Romare Bearden and Hannah Hoch, they have analyzed how artists can express an idea, concept or emotion through their use of Elements of Art, such as line, shape and color, and Principles of Art such as balance, emphasis and contrast. For their unit project, student will create their own expressive work of collage art.

Animation Production

The students of Animation Production have just finished their study of the history of the motion picture. Through this unit, students learned how the work of photographers like Eadweard Muybridge and inventors like the Lumiere Brothers lead to the invention of modern cinema. They created projects like thaumatropes, zoopraxiscopes and flipbooks inspired by early motion picture technology. Now, they will begin their deep-dive into the history of animation through photography, which was propelled by the invention of cinema. They will begin exploring and developing mastery in the use of iPads as a tool to create their own animations through stop-motion photography.

Debate and Diplomacy

In the Debate and Diplomacy SPARK students have been learning about the key elements of argumentation in order to build a sound case in support for or against the proposition “This house believes that students at MS890 are morally obligated to stand up for the victims of bullying at all times.”

Latin Dance

In Latin Dance, students are creating one minute choreography to a Salsa song of choice to demonstrate each of the dance patterns they’ve learned, as well as their own freestyle dance. Students are expected to include the Basic Salsa step, a left turn, the side break step, a right turn, and elements from other dance genres of their choice. They have also learned about the musicality, timing, and instruments that are involved when composing each salsa song piece.

Computer Science

In Computer Science, we are creating our online portfolio projects through Pencil Code. We will continue to practice our use of loops and variables to make simpler and more elegant codes that allow our programs to run complex instructions. We will apply our coding skills to create a portfolio of our own artwork, animation, games, or stories.
2\textsuperscript{nd} Annual Ghoul Bash

We had a ghastly good time at our 2\textsuperscript{nd} annual ghoul bash. Here are some highlights!
**Teacher of the Month**

Joseph Fava is the math and robotics enrichment teacher at MS 890. Joseph has received a B.S. in Mathematics at Siena College and an M.A. in Adolescent Math Education at Hunter College. As an undergraduate at Siena College, Joseph gained experience student teaching in upstate New York and spent a portion of his weekends and summers teaching middle school robotics at both Siena College and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Joseph began his teaching career as the sixth, seventh and eighth grade math teacher at Our Lady Queen of Angels located in East Harlem and remained there for five years. Mr. Fava continues to develop exciting ways to help his students master problem-solving skills through real-world situations and inquiry-based learning.