

# Hello December

## MS 354 TIMES

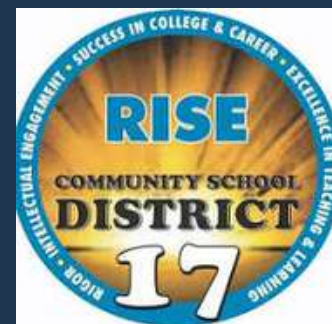
December 2023 Issue



### Feature Story LIVESCHOOL

*Building Positive  
school Culture  
through School-Wide  
Points*

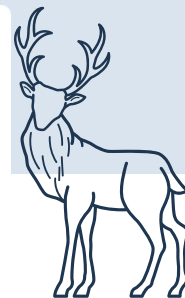
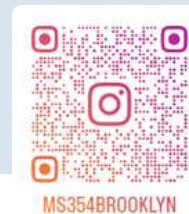
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**Dr. Monique Campbell, Principal**  
**Kimani Smith, Assistant Principal**  
**Cylann Phillips, Assistant Principal**  
**Maxine Griffith, School Counselor**  
**Elroy O. Cormack, Parent Coordinator**  
**Amanda Bernardine, Counseling in Schools**  
**Handel Barclay, New York Edge**

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Follow us on  
Instagram



For more information please visit our website or call us  
MS354.com, 718-774-0362



# A Message from our Principal



Greetings MS 354 family,

I would like to say how grateful I am for the opportunity to continue to work in a role where I collaborate with parents, teachers, students and the community to continue to meet our school wide Goals, Vision and Mission. I have seen the progress made by the efforts of our teachers and support staff, it is promising and motivating.

It seems as if we just started the school year and December is already upon us. As we end 2023, I can't help but to be reflective on all of our great accomplishments: We made significant math gains; and continue with our upward trajectory with ELA improvement. We offered our students opportunities to participate in technology, performing arts, home economics, and sports [Academies]; we outfitted all classrooms with computers, and we provided assisted technology with Google Translations for ALL ENL students. We offered enrichment and remedial support to students; provided virtual learning platforms; provided SEL support for our students; and offered parent workshops.

While we count our strengths and blessings at this time of year, we also must take time to realize that the holiday season can be a stressful time for individuals and families. While school is in session, administrators, counselors, teachers and staff continue to keep our doors open should students need to talk. Remember that both children and adults need breaks from the many demands of school life. Let's support our students and staff in finding a healthy balance between school, work, and family.

In an effort to further cultivate an atmosphere where it is the norm to acknowledge positive behaviors, thoughts and actions, we encourage our students and teachers to construct personal and community affirmations and consistently use them. The research shows that positive affirmations help students gain confidence, contributes to a growth mindset, and helps kids to truly believe in themselves. Kids need to hear what makes them special and strong over and over again. When used consistently, affirmations can change students' attitudes, decrease stress, increase wellbeing, improve academic performance and encourage behavior change.

I look forward to our continued work as we strengthen our community efforts, ensuring that each and everyone reaches their highest potential.

On behalf of the entire MS 354 staff, I wish you a safe and relaxing winter break. We look forward to welcoming back our students on January 2, 2024.

Best regards,  
Dr. Monique Campbell



# DECEMBER CELEBRATIONS

Happy Holidays

May the lights of  
**HANUKKAH**  
usher in a better world  
for all humankind.

*-Arthur Weisbaum*



SPARKLING  
AWESOME  
DAZZLING  
WONDERFUL  
AMAZING  
ORIGINAL  
SPECIAL



The gift of love,  
the gift of peace, and the  
gift of happiness - may all  
these be yours.  
Wishing you a season full  
of light and laughter.

*Merry Christmas*



## DID YOU KNOW?

December 1, 1955: In Montgomery. Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat in the front section of a bus. Hot off the press - This month, members of the Congressional Black Caucus marked the 68th anniversary of Rosa Parks' arrest by urging Congress to support a bill that would declare Dec. 1, "Rosa Parks Day," a federal holiday.



December 2, 1823: President James Monroe declares the "Monroe Doctrine" opposing European colonialism in the Americas.

December 4, 1954: The first Burger King is opened in Miami Fl.

December 10, 1964: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. received the Nobel Peace Prize

## FEATURE STORY

# LiveSchool

We believe at MS 354 that social reinforcement in the classroom is crucial to a child's growth and development. These reinforcements involve students receiving supportive and complimentary feedback from teachers and peers for positive behavior. This feedback includes words like "Good work," "Great job," and "You worked really hard on that" and actions like clapping, smiling, giving thumbs up, or patting a on the back.

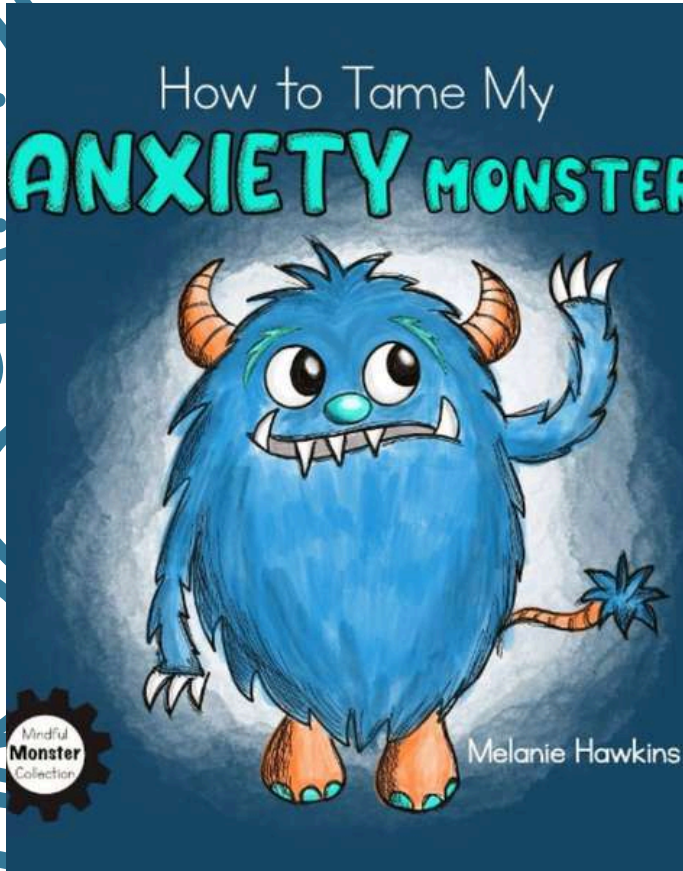
In cultivating this culture of excellence, we would like all of our scholars to feel that their actions are meaningful and significant. To encourage our students to put their best foot forward and create a positive learning environment, we use the LiveSchool app. Teachers award points for good behavior and hard work, as well as document negative behaviors and comments. By working hard on a regular basis, our students will be able to earn rewards and participate in fun events.

## Possible Grand Prizes!!!!



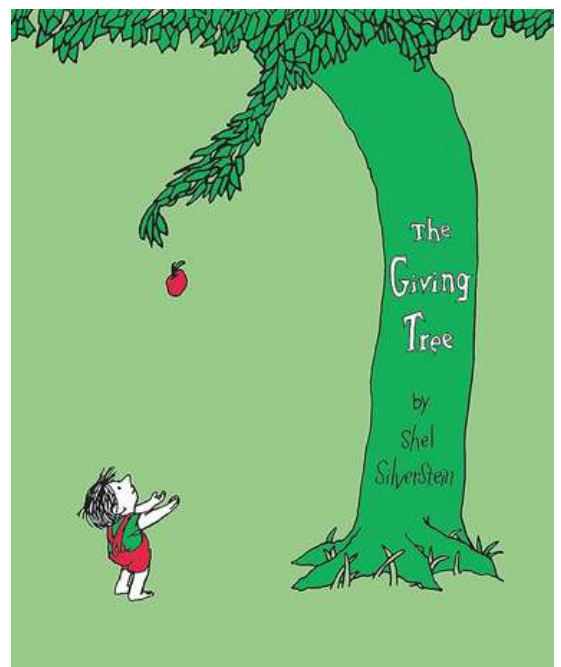
# SEL CORNER

Theme: Anxiety



How To Tame My Anxiety Monster is a book that helps students understand what anxiety is, how it can make them feel...with real, physical symptom, and help them learn things they can do to get anxiety under control. Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness during stressful situations. Ways to manage anxiety disorders include learning about anxiety, mindfulness, relaxation techniques, correct breathing techniques and support from family, friends and even the MS 354 Community. We will be having conversations with students about anxiety at the school.

The Giving Tree is the book of the month and is an American children's picture book written and illustrated by Shel Silverstein that follows the lives of an apple tree and a boy. There are several take-aways from this beautiful story. The tree's consistent love and giving represented the truth that we are happy only if we make our meaning in life something greater than our own happiness. Making the boy happy was the aim and goal of the tree.



# PTA Corner

Join The School of Integrated Learning PTA

## Meet our PTA Executive Board/Parent Leaders



**Ms. Sherley S. Joseph**  
**PTA President**

Chief administrator of PTA, Represents/speaks at functions, Lead Meetings, Build parent volunteers, Build team, Manage bylaws, Manage events.



**Ms. Prisca Julian-Holmes**  
**PTA Recording Secretary**

Record all minutes, Prepare and read all minutes at PTA meetings, Maintain approval records, Meeting agenda, Sign in sheets, Maintain all PTA records.



**Ms. Portia Chin**  
**PTA Treasurer**

Custodian of the unit's finances, Prevent misuse of funds, Principal check signatory, Manage PTA budget

Upcoming PTA Meetings  
12/21/2023 at 6:00pm  
01/18/1024 at 6:00pm

### A message From President Joseph

As a powerful voice of our children, we look forward to merging the gap between parents and teachers to advocate for our students and our school; to emerge from a place of curiosity to fearlessly bringing forth the resources needed for our students, our parents, and our community as a whole. We are looking forward to working with a collaborative spirit and a commitment to serve within the diversity of our communities, with respect, and with the guiding notion that each one of our students and families matter. Together we aim for greater success, empowering our families as we grow and empower our children to thrive beyond the status quo or statistics. We are the INTEGRATED LEARNERS and we will continue to stand on the firm foundation "Knowing that success comes through resiliency, we follow the rules, make good choices, and learn something new everyday."

Thank you



# Student Spotlight



**Janelle D Haiti (Grade 8)**

**INTERESTS:**

Playing guitar, dancing, I like music. I like the variety and work ethic in performance arts - There is no "can't" you just have to try.

**Favorite Subject:**

Math. I like learning about different ways of solving problems. My teacher Ms. Johnson believes in all of us, and she believes that we can do better. I also like US History. I like how Ms. Mitchell engages with the class, and she makes learning fun.

**Future Career:** Psychologist. I want to help people of all ages to not suffer in silence.



**Aiden Thomas (Grade 7)**

**INTERESTS:**

Coding, playing Roblox, Creating Games

**Favorite Subject:**

Math

I like problem Solving

**Future Career:**

Game Developer

I would like to create games that people like to play. One great thing that I like about this school is our Academies because they help me learn about my interests. I am also looking forward to competing in the spelling B.



**Jared D Haiti (Grade 6)**

**INTERESTS:**

I like playing basketball and video games. I like playing basketball with my dad.

**Favorite Subject:**

Math because I understand it and I am good at it.

Mr. Maitree makes sure that everyone in the class understands what he is teaching, and Mr. Edwards reviews the lessons.

**Future Career:**

I would like to be an engineer or game designer and make a lot of money.



# Staff Spotlight



## TAMAR DELISSER

When you think of a person who is approachable, caring, giving, calm graceful and open-minded, you think of Tamar Delisser.

Ms. Delisser is our principal, pupil accounting, payroll procurement secretary here at the School of Integrated Learning. She embodies professionalism in a nutshell. Her attention to detail, problem-solving and great organizational skills makes her one of the best secretaries on the planet! She works with teachers, parents and students every day, and has excellent communication skills. In addition, she is great at multi-tasking and staying organized. To add to her qualities, she has the ability to stay calm in any situation -not to mention, she sounds really great on the PA system. She is able to keep a clear head and keep track of everything from deadlines to essential files. Ms. Delisser is friendly and very personable. She is an integral part of our school community.

### **Tamar's quote to live by:**

“For I know the plans... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”



# Climate Action at MS 354

## REDUCE YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

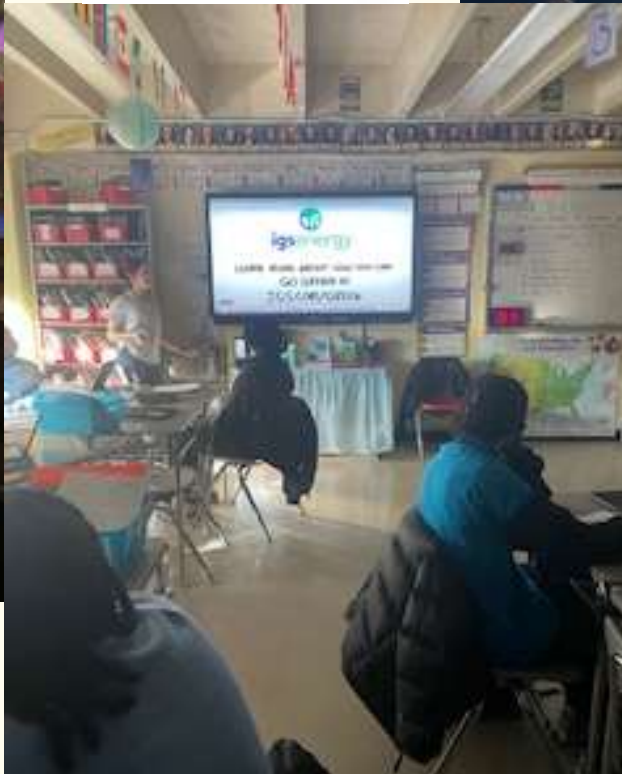
In 2023-24, NYC Public Schools will launch Climate Action Days: four days to celebrate climate action in every school.

Climate Action Days are a fun, creative learning opportunity for entire school communities. They are also a way that any school can get started with climate action. Each day will be based on a theme, and will showcase the importance of climate education and sustainability practices. MS 354 played our part in conserving energy by turning all classroom lights off during period 4 on 12/06/23.

With Climate Action Days, we are engaging the next generation of leaders, in classrooms and communities. When our teachers, building and school staff, and students come together to act, we can make a difference!

### Dates and Themes

- Wednesday, December 6: Energy
- Wednesday, February 7: Waste
- Wednesday, April 17: Health, Wellness, and Green Space
- Wednesday, June 12: Water



# DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



## Winter Wishes

Gift giving is at the heart of Winter Wishes!

New York Cares bring holiday cheer to thousands of young New Yorkers through the Winter Wishes Program. Each MS 354 scholar is encouraged to reflect on something that they did that positively impacted someone, and request an item of their choosing that they would like to receive as a gift.

These gifts are distributed in December.

Research shows that providing children with this kind of fulfillment can have a positive impact on mental health.

## The Universal Declaration of Human Rights turns 75

10 December 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of one of the world's most groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This landmark document enshrines the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. The Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 and sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.



# December Birthdays


DOMINIC J.  
JEANETTE B.  
KINGSTON W.  
IBRAHIM S.  
HAKEEM M.  
SERENA R.  
CRISTAL M.  
KERRY J.  
SANAI A.  
MIYLON W.  
ISAIAH M  
KESIAH M.  
CALLIN R.  
DASHAWN T.  
AMIR N.  
ISAIAH S.  
FELIX W.  
HOUDOU B.  
DONNELL S





# CIS Corner



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ..



*My Brother's Keeper*

EVERY FRIDAY  
STARTING 12/01/23

TIME: LUNCH PERIOD  
LOCATION: ROOM 140

 PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED CONSENT FORM FOR ADMISSION. 

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ..



*My Sister's Keeper*

EVERY THURSDAY  
STARTING  
12/14/2023

TIME: LUNCH PERIOD  
LOCATION: ROOM 140

 PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED CONSENT FORM FOR ADMISSION. 

M.S. 354 and Counseling In Schools staff have partnered to create our very own My Sister's Keeper and My Brother's Keeper groups.

My Sister's Keeper will be held every **THURSDAY** during the student's lunch period in Room 140.

My Brother's Keeper will be held every **FRIDAY** during student's lunch period in Room 140.

**For admission, please contact Ms. Flores or Ms. Walters for participation forms.**

**Ms. Flores - [alma@counselingschools.org](mailto:alma@counselingschools.org)  
Ms. Walters - [akia@counselingschools.org](mailto:akia@counselingschools.org)**



# CIS Corner

CONGRATULATIONS TO CLASS 603 !!

NOVEMBER'S PERFECT ATTENDANCE AWARD FOR CLASS 603 IS ...

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## PIZZA & PAJAMAS PARTY

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WEDNESDAY  
DECEMBER 13, 2023

TIME: LUNCH PERIOD

LOCATION: ROOM 140

PLEASE WEAR SLEEPWEAR THAT FULLY COVERS YOUR BODY, ISN'T TOO TIGHT OR REVEALING, AND DOES NOT DEPICT VIOLENCE, DRUGS, OR OFFENSIVE CONTENT. NO HOODED GARMENTS ALLOWED.

Class 603 will receive a reward of pizza and pajama day on Wednesday, December 13 for having the highest perfect attendance percentage in November.

**KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!**  
*Stay tuned for upcoming perfect attendance celebrations.*

As the year comes to a close, we at CIS wish you all a season filled with laughter, love, and cherished moments.

# Parent Corner

## GIVE KIDS MEANINGFUL COMPLIMENTS



We remember that words that make us feel special for years afterwards. Some compliments last a lifetime. They are even more powerful when they focus on the type of person we are or our values because they become a strong anchor for all our decision making intentions. Meaningful compliments are an **AMAZING STRATEGY** to change behavior too!

We all want to feel good and focusing on well timed and detailed compliments can help us focus on what is working, instead of what isn't. Having a child overhear you speaking nicely about the effort they are making or an act of kindness does so much for a child's confidence. It makes them feel secure in their relationship with their parent and also reinforces what good behavior means so confusion is eliminated in soft/kind ways.

These are beautiful ways to support a child's confidence and mindset. Let's practice giving our kids meaningful compliments!!

# Food



Sugar Dough:



## The Best Sugar Cookies for Decorating

• Total: 1 hr 30 min (includes chilling and drying time)

• Yield: twenty-four 2 1/2-inch cookies

### Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

1/8 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon fine salt

1 large egg

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 1/2 sticks (12 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/4 cup confectioners' sugar

### Royal Icing:

1/2 pound (about 1 3/4 cups) confectioners' sugar, plus more for thickening

1 tablespoon meringue powder

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Assorted food coloring, optional

### Directions

Special equipment:

ruler, 2 1/2 -inch cookie cutter, pastry bag, small decorating tip

1. For the sugar dough: Whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl. Beat together the egg and vanilla in a small bowl.
2. Beat the butter, granulated sugar and confectioners' sugar together in a large bowl with an electric mixer on low speed. Once incorporated, increase the speed to medium and beat until slightly creamy, about 3 minutes. Stop and scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed.
3. Reduce the speed to low again and slowly pour in the egg mixture and beat until combined. Add the flour mixture in 3 additions, increasing the speed as the dough gets thicker to keep the beaters spinning. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and the beaters as needed. Once all the flour is just incorporated, increase the speed to medium-high and beat until the dough is very smooth, about 5 minutes.

4. Turn the dough out of the bowl and bring it together. Divide into 2 even pieces. Shape each piece into a flat square and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate the dough for at least 3 hours or overnight.

5. To roll, cut and bake the cookies: Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

6. Dust another sheet of parchment paper with flour and put 1 piece of the dough on top. Dust with more flour and top with another sheet of parchment. Roll the dough out between the parchment sheets into a square about 1/4-inch thick (about 11-by-9 inches) and place in the freezer for 5 minutes.

Repeat with the remaining piece of dough.

7. From 1 piece of rolled dough, cut out cookies with a 2 1/2-inch cutter and arrange on the prepared baking sheets, about 2 inches apart. Refrigerate while you cut the remaining cookies. Reroll any scraps of dough and repeat the freezing, cutting and refrigerating process until all the dough is used.

8. Bake, rotating the baking sheets front to back and bottom to top about halfway through, until golden brown around the edges, about 12 minutes. Let cool completely on the baking sheets set on a wire cooling rack, about 30 minutes.

9. Meanwhile, make the royal icing: Combine the confectioners' sugar and meringue powder in a large bowl. Add 3 tablespoons water and the vanilla and beat with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until the icing forms thick and glossy peaks, about 2 minutes (add up to 1 tablespoon more water, if needed). Tint with a few drops of food coloring if desired.

10. Fit a pastry bag with a small round tip and fill it with the icing.

11. Pipe royal icing on cookies with the design of your liking and let dry for 30 minutes.

# Winter Activities for kids

## 1. Take a spin on an ice-skating rink.

Nothing says winter fun like gliding freely on the ice! Excuse us while we live out our Winter Olympic dreams (in our heads, at least...). There are plenty of [ice-skating rinks in NYC, Long Island, and Westchester](#), you're guaranteed to find a skating rink near you.

## 2. Head to an observation deck to see the view of NYC from above.

We live in (and near!) the greatest city in the world, and [NYC's observation decks](#) will remind you of that wonder when you feast your eyes on some amazing views. Old favorites are the Empire State Building and Top of the Rock, but have you been to the Edge yet? Or NYC's newest observation deck at Summit? It's an experience you won't believe until you see it.

## 3. Treat the kids to a family-friendly Broadway show!

What's more quintessential NYC than heading to Broadway?! There are so [many shows that are great for families](#), including The Lion King, Wicked, Dear Evan Hanson, and Aladdin. What's more?

## 4. Help your kids flex their DIY skills.

Whether you pick up a craft kit at the store or find a cute and easy DIY on Pinterest, spending some time crafting is a joy! Bonus: Your kids will be so proud of what they made from scratch; it'll make your heart smile.

- [Tie-dye T-shirts](#) (no, it's not just for the summer...)
- [Grassy Garden Gnomes](#) (add a little greenery to your home!)
- [Make your own moon sand](#)
- [Decorate mugs with permanent markers](#)
- [Pom-pom hand puppets](#) (it's a low-mess craft!)
- [Starry slime](#)
- [Winter bird feeders](#)



## 5. Get lost in a museum.

Our area has such an abundance of museums that you're 100-percent guaranteed to [find a museum that your family loves](#). Whether it's the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), the [Cradle of Aviation Museum](#), or Westchester Children's Museum, time spent at a museum is not wasted. Want something exciting to entice your kids with? The [American Museum of Natural History](#) (one of our absolute favorites!) has a new exhibit that opened Dec. 15: Sharks. It features dozens of life-size shark models ranging from the enormous megalodon to the adorably tiny pocket shark that fits in the palm of your hand!

## 6. Spend an afternoon sledding.

If there's enough snow on the ground, of course! Bundle up, grab your sled, and head over to one of [our favorite sledding spots](#) for an afternoon of downhill fun! Want a little more thrill? Head to a [nearby snow tubing park](#), like [Mount Peter](#) in Warwick or [Mountain Creek Resort](#) in Vernon, NJ. (Many of the snow tubing locations make their own snow, so you can still go tubing if there still isn't snow on the ground!)

## 7. Have a movie marathon.

Sometimes you just want to stay in your pajamas and lounge on the couch all day, especially when it's freezing outside. And there's nothing wrong with that! After all, Winter Break is the perfect time to slow down, spend uninterrupted time with your kids, and just relax. Let each member of the family pick out a movie or decide on a theme. The options are endless! For example Kid-friendly documentaries, Black History movies to stream with kids, 80s movies that kids would love, Women's history movies and documentaries.

Need some ideas? Check out these roundups:

## 8. Bowl a strike!

Or spare, or just try to knock some pins down...whatever your score ends up being, your family is sure to have a blast when you visit one of the [bowling alleys in our area](#)!

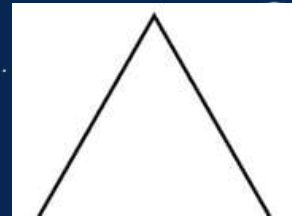
## 9. Explore the ocean at a nearby aquarium.

Sure, it's winter. But that doesn't mean you can't explore sea life (you'll just have to do it at a [nearby aquarium](#) instead of the beach). Head to Coney Island's New York Aquarium, where you can check out weird and wonderful invertebrates in [the Spineless exhibit](#). Or plan a day trip to American Dream, where you can visit [New Jersey SEA LIFE Aquarium](#), an NYC-themed experience. And don't forget about [the Long Island Aquarium](#)! It has one of the largest all-living closed-system coral reef displays in the Western Hemisphere.



# Winter Craft Activity to do with your Kids

## Folded Paper Icicles



### Step 1:

Cut out a long, thin triangle pattern; then trace it onto construction paper.

**TIP:** You will need two triangles for each ornament.

### Step 2:

Lay two triangles on your workspace, perpendicular to one another with one slightly overlapping the other and glue together.

### Step 3:

Turn them over and position them so that one triangle is pointing to the left and one is pointing down. Fold the triangle that is pointing to the left over the other triangle so that it's now pointing to the right. Then, take the triangle that is pointing down and fold it up over the other triangle so that it is now pointing up.

### Step 4:

Repeat folding the triangles over one another, alternating, until you have it completely folded.

### Step 5:

Now you can gently stretch your folded icicle.

### Step 6:

Fold the top triangle up and glue a piece of yarn, ribbon or string to make a hanger for your ornament.

### Step 7:

If you wish to glitter your icicle, add glue along the edge, then sprinkle with glitter. Let dry.

# December Events

**Saturday School Begins**  
**Saturday, December 2**

- **Regents Prep (US History, Global & Living Environment)**
- **LiveSchool Points**
- **Raffle**
- **Games and Fun**

**NYC Schoolwide**  
**Climate Action Initiative**  
**ENERGY**

**Schoolwide action: Lights Out 4th Period**  
**December 6**



**District 17 Math Slam**  
**Classroom Level**

**December 20**

**December 21**  
**MS 354**

**Winter Team Trivia**  
**Teams by Grade!**

**MS 354**

**Winter Ball**  
**Dec. 15**

**Theme: Frozen Winter**

**Pay To Get Away \$2**  
**Ugly Sweater Day**  
**December 13**



**Winter Wishes Gift Distribution**  
**December 22**

