

# MS 354 TIMES

*Let's Celebrate New Beginnings!*

# HELLO JANUARY

**Feature Story**  
**Feeding our Families**



## In This Issue:

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- Tips for Teaching Kids About Money
- Self Care
- 2024 Resolutions



The school of Integrated Learning  
11224 Park Pl, Brooklyn NY 11213

Dr. Monique Campbell, Principal  
Kimani Smith, Assistant Principal  
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**For more information please visit our website  
or call us MS243.com, 718-774-0362**

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# A Message from our Principal

Dear Students, Parents, and Staff,

I hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits. As we embark on the new year, I wanted to take a moment to extend a warm welcome to each and everyone of you as we begin the 2024 academic school year at our esteemed middle school.

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication from our incredible staff, who work tirelessly to create a nurturing and stimulating environment for our students. Together we will continue to provide an exceptional education that empowers our students to reach their full potential.

To our students, I want to remind you that the start of a new year is a chance for a fresh start. It is an opportunity to set new goals, embrace new challenges, and grow both academically and personally. I encourage you to reflect on your past achievements and challenges and use them as stepping stones to propel yourself forward. Remember, everyday is a chance to learn, improve, and make a positive impact on those around you.

As we begin this new year, I urge you to prioritize organization and time management. Establishing good habits early on will set you up for success throughout the year. Take the time to declutter and organize your school supplies, create a study schedule, and designate a quiet and comfortable space for focused learning. This will help in maximizing your productivity and minimize unnecessary stress. Make sure that you prioritize your wellbeing. Make sure you get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet, and engage in regular physical activity. Remember, a healthy mind and body are the foundation for achieving your goals.

Middle school is not only about academics but also about building relationships and exploring new opportunities.. Take the time to make new friends, nurture existing friendships, and develop positive relationships with your teachers and mentors. Participate in the academies and school activities that are aligned with your interests and passions. Embrace new experiences and step out of your comfort zone. These experiences will shape you into well-rounded individuals and provide you with valuable life skills.

As we embark on this new year, let us approach it with enthusiasm, determination, and a commitment to excellence. Together we will make 2024 academic year a memorable and successful one. I am confident that with our collective efforts, we will achieve great things.

Wishing you all a fantastic start to the new year!


Dr. Monique Campbell



# Feature Story

# MS 354 Food Pantry

Cl



**MS 354 is pleased to provide a source of FREE HEALTHY and nutritious food to our families.**

**Our goal is to assist in providing the critical resources that can help our families. We are able to provide these offerings to all of our families seeking support.**



## Distribution Dates

### JANUARY

**WED. January 24, 2024**

**10:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

**SAT. January 27, 2024**

**10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

### FEBRUARY

**SAT. February 10, 2024**

**10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

**WED. February 14, 2024**

**10:00 AM - 11:00 AM**



# EVENTS **2024** SCHEDULE

JANUARY

## PS 289 SCHOOL VISIT - READING

Select Students

FRI  
12

## SPELLING BEE DISTRICT FINALS

Aiden Thomas & Xavier Meadows

THU  
25

GOOD  
LUCK!!

## QUEENSBOROUGH COLLEGE TOUR

Select Classes

THU  
25

THU  
25

## GLOBAL REGENTS

Select 8th Grade Students

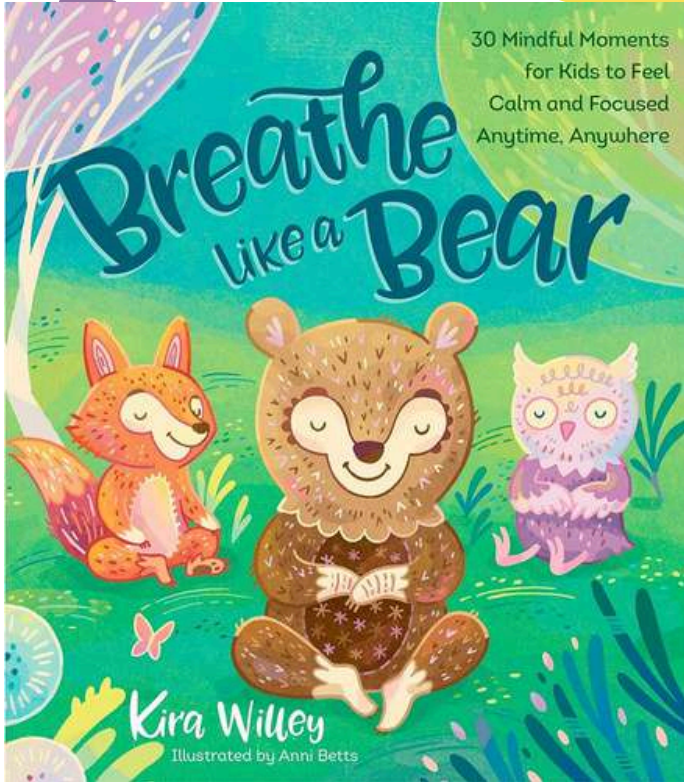
## COLLEGE DAY

Students can wear college shirts (no hoods)

FRI  
26



# SEL CORNER

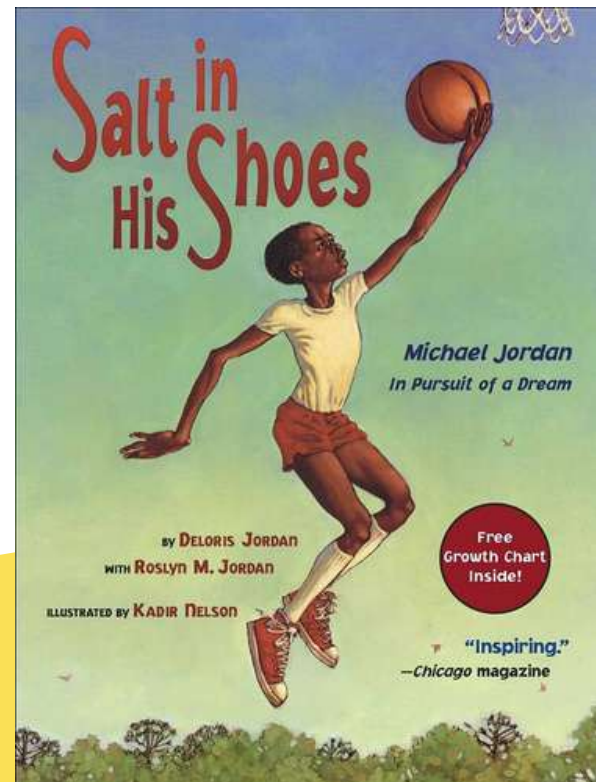


## THEME: MINDFULNESS

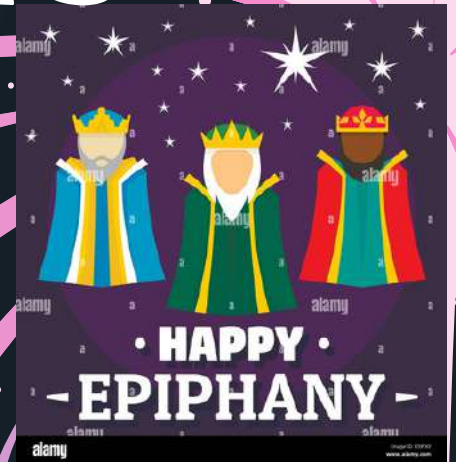
BREATHE LIKE A BEAR IS A BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED COLLECTION OF MINDFULNESS EXERCISES DESIGNED TO TEACH KIDS TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING THEIR BODIES, BREATH, AND EMOTIONS.

## THEME: COMMITMENT

THIS IS A TRUE STORY ABOUT MICHAEL JORDAN. HE ALMOST GAVE UP ON HIS DREAM OF PLAYING PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL BECAUSE HE THOUGHT HE WOULD NEVER GROW TALL ENOUGH. HIS PARENTS TAUGHT HIM HARDWORK, DETERMINATION AND TO PERSERVERE THROUGH THE HARDSHIPS. HIS MOTHER, THE AUTHOR, TELLS THE STORY OF MICHAEL JORDAN IN THIS BOOK



# JANUARY CELEBRATIONS



## DID YOU KNOW?

***JANUARY 1, 1863 - THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION BY PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN FREED THE SLAVES IN THE STATES REBELLING AGAINST THE UNION***

***JANUARY 1, 1892 - ELLIS ISLAND IN NEW YORK HARBOR OPENED.***

***JANUARY 19, 1883 - THE FIRST ELECTRICAL LIGHTING SYSTEM USING OVERHEAD WIRES WAS CONSTRUCTED BY THOMAS EDISON***

***JANUARY 25, 1924 - THE FIRST WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES BEGIN IN CHAMONIX, FRANCE.***



# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

*Ambika Thoreson*



Ms. Thoreson can be viewed as a “quiet storm” in our school. She possesses a combination of skills, knowledge, and qualities that enables her to effectively inspire and guide her students in the world of art. She is deeply passionate about art and genuinely enjoys sharing her love for it with her students and colleagues. Her enthusiasm is contagious and

helps to ignite a similar passion in her students. She has a strong foundation in art theory, history, techniques, and various art forms. She continuously updates her knowledge and skills to stay current with the evolving art world. She is highly creative and can think outside the box.

She encourages creativity and fosters an environment that allows students to explore their own artistic ideas. She encourages her students to experiment with different techniques, and push the boundaries of their artistic abilities. Ms. Thoreson embodies patience and empathy. She understands that art is a deeply personal and emotional form of expression, and approaches her students with patience, empathy and understanding. She helps her students overcome challenges and grow as artists. She adapts her teaching methods to accommodate the diverse needs of her students. She provides positive reinforcements and celebrates her students’ achievements.

These qualities collectively contribute to Ms. Thoreson creating a nurturing and inspiring environment where students can develop their artistic abilities, gain confidence, and find their own artistic voice.





# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## KAILEI BISHOP

Interests: I like doing crafting, especially making bracelets. I also love doing hair - braiding etc.

Favorite Subject: My favorite subject is ELA because I like writing and reading. I like to see different perspectives.

I really appreciate all of my teachers - They are really welcoming.

Future Career: Criminal Defense Attorney - I would like to help people who are falsely convicted.

GRADE 8



## TEY ANNA BURRELL

Interests: I like gaming because I can play with friends and meet new people.

Favorite Subject: Math & Art. I like math because it is easy and I can challenge myself. I like Art because I can be creative.

Future Career: Doctor - because I like helping people, and they make a lot of money.

GRADE 7



## KELWIN SEYMOUR

Interests: I like playing games because they are fun and adventurous. I also like sports.

Favorite Subject: Science - I like doing experiments and Ms. Parkins explains things clearly.

Future Career: Scientist - I like working with chemicals - and creating things.

GRADE 6



MS 354'S RISING STARS



# January BIRTHDAYS

Deon K 810 01/25

Yousif S. 804 01/26

Elijah G. 811 01/27

Naeem S 803 01/08

Azerah B. 810 01/16

Dameika M. 704 01/05

Oumar T. 610 01/10

Trianna J. 704 01/20

Alexis M. 603 01/24

Urahsan J. 704 01/29

Kierra K. 603 01/01

Emma P. 603 01/03

Tahima L. 603 01/04

Xavier M. 603 01/13

Destiny P. 604 01/19

Sarai G. 604 01/21

Sahida K. 611 01/21

Justis B. 603 01/26





# Parent Corner

**New Parent Room  
Coming Soon!!!!**

Thanks to Professor Dong-Sei Kim,  
architecture students: Kendal Eastwood, Elise  
Park and Lily Klijan from the School of  
Architecture and Design,  
New York Institute of Technology,  
for helping us with this venture.



## 2024 PTA Meeting Schedule

Thursday - January 18, 2024

Thursday - February 15, 2024

Thursday - March 21, 2024

Thursday - April 18, 2024

Thursday - May 23, 2024

Thursday - June 20, 2024



**MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS**

THIS THURSDAY 7-8 PM  
RIGHT AFTER OUR PTA MEETING WE WILL...

**STOP  
SILENT**

**START  
TALKING**

PLEASE JOIN OUR TITLE 1, PTA,  
SLT LEADERSHIP TEAM

FOR AN OPEN DISCUSSION ON  
MENTAL HEALTH WITH TIPS TO HELP  
OUR PARENTS BETTER COPE WITH  
DAY TO DAY CHALLENGES AND RISE  
UP IN THEIR DAILY LIVES.

WITH  
**CHAKA PHAIRE**



# Parent Corner

## *Moments that Actually Matter to Kids*

When you **support** and encourage their dreams

When you give them **undivided attention**

When you **teach them life-skills**

When you **cuddle** or **hug** them

When you **forgave** *their mistakes*

When you **celebrate** their **achievements** with them

When you set a **positive example** through **words** or **actions**

When you encourage them to **express** their **thoughts** and **feelings**

The days are filled with hundreds of moments but only a few will count years from now.

These Matter:

A child will always remember how you supported (or belittled) their dreams. Their resentment and even blame for not doing more won't be easily forgotten.

A child notices when we give them undivided attention. They also notice how they come second to devices, friends or other things because they are frequently made to feel less important when they need you.

A child will always value support learning life skills because it will make them self-sufficient when others pay or avoid things they handle easily. They develop a special sense of pride and strength knowing they can create solutions for themselves.

A child will never forget the cuddles or hugs they were given. They rest in close relationships, create them naturally and have that lifelong benefit.

A child understands the value of honesty and repair through forgiveness THEY were given.

When they practiced giving apologies and felt the acceptance, they learned that holding negative emotions in or staying silent with regret isn't worth the harm it causes either side.

A child that had their achievements celebrated learns to honor and praise themselves. They build strong self esteem and self confidence in going after what they dream of.

A child that follows the positive examples of their parents feels like they belong to a greater whole. They understand the meaning of legacy s they build it and protect their family's legacy.

Most importantly, a child that had their ability to express emotions and thoughts supported becomes a strong spouse, parent and individual. Every time they speak for themselves, stand up to wrongs or just acts in their own best interest, they will value their parents who made it possible.





# 8 tips for teaching kids about money

## 1 Have frequent money talks

Start to introduce some basic concepts — such as what money is used for, how we earn it and how much items cost et cetera. "Money is a practical tool in life, so don't let it be a mysterious concept." Choose a "money word," like earn, spend, or save, and explain how it works in your daily life as you go to your job, buy groceries or put some money away for a memorable family outing.

## 3 Emphasize saving

At some point, your kids are going to want things that exceed their allowance. Encouraging them to save for those items teaches them the concepts of delayed gratification and trade-offs. Make a routine of setting aside a small portion—say, 10%—of every dollar they receive, including allowances and gifts.

## 5 Discuss needs vs wants

Ask a child what they need and what they want to help them learn. At the supermarket, explain how you should think about using money responsibly by spending money on needs first, then wants. So, for example, you put eggs, milk and bread in your cart before picking up candy, a toy or stickers. Let your child know that there should always be a plan for how money is used. Buying items on a whim is a luxury for when you may have extra money.

## 7 Introduce them to investments

Once your kids have saved some money, you can consider opening a custodial brokerage account for them or help them purchase fractional shares. Along with gaining a sense of ownership, your child can learn the importance of researching and managing their assets. "Let them choose a few stocks to invest in. Then, set up regular meetings to review their performance."

## 2 Introduce the value of money

An allowance is a good first step—especially if you tie at least part of it to chores that teach responsibility and a strong work ethic. Earning an allowance introduces kids to the value of money and making choices for themselves. "In fact, kids often find they make different choices with their own money than they would with someone else's."

## 4 Follow a budget for favorite grocery items

Go grocery shopping with a specific budget for the items your household needs — and include some of your child's favorite or most-used items. Send your child or children to a specific aisle to grab a handful of items — including some of their favorites. Tell them to keep the items under the budgeted amount, and look at the "unit price" to make sure you are getting the most cost-effective items to get the best deal.

## 6 Encourage a summer job (when they are teenagers)

"We know from research that young people who have jobs are more likely to be better savers in the long run," So, make sure your child is saving a portion of every paycheck—and maybe even require them to help out with other expenses, as well. "It's perfectly reasonable to expect kids to pay for their own gasoline or trips to the movies."

## 8 Choose a charity and give

Once your child starts making a little bit of money, teach them the importance of helping others through charitable giving. Have them choose the charity. Giving can be in the form of money, food, clothes, or spending time with others.

# JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

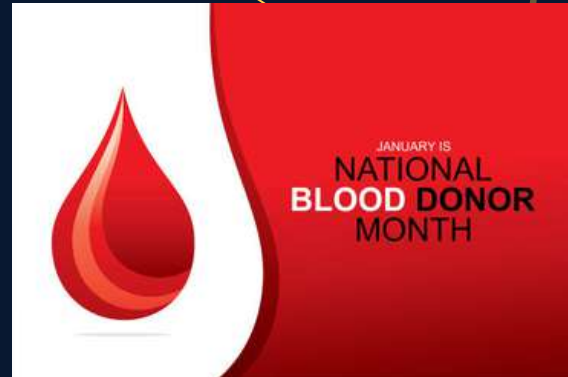


Poverty Awareness Month is observed in January every year. This important endeavor is observed in America all month long. Did you know that the U.S. ranks second highest in poverty rates among its peer countries?

(nationaltoday.com) Poverty Awareness Month is about taking an opportunity to learn more about this social ill, raise awareness among others, and understand how everyone can help.

## How to Celebrate Poverty Awareness Month

1. Volunteer at a local food bank. Spend a day helping out at a local food bank and see firsthand the impact of poverty on individuals and families. ...
2. Educate yourself and others. ...
3. Organize a fundraiser. ...
4. Participate in a poverty simulation. ...
5. Advocate for policy change.



According to the American Red Cross, winter is "one of the most difficult times of year to collect enough blood products to meet patient needs." That's because of, among other things, busy holiday schedules and bad weather often resulting in canceled blood drives. Furthermore, seasonal illnesses such as the flu force potential donors to forgo their blood donations.

That's just one of the reasons that National Blood Donor Month, which has taken place each January since 1970, is such an important observance. Donating blood saves many lives and improves health for many people. According to the World Health Organization, "blood is the most precious gift that anyone can give to another person – the gift of life. A decision to donate your blood can save a life, or even several if your blood is separated into its components – red cells, platelets and plasma."



## CIS Corner



### CIS ATTENDANCE INITIATIVES

On Wednesday, December 13, Class 603 was rewarded with a pajama day, game room access, and pizza for having the highest perfect attendance in November.

**KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!**

Stay tuned for upcoming perfect attendance celebrations.



**MS 354**

# Performing Arts at MS 354

# new york edge



**It's no big secret that getting kids involved in the performing arts can have major payoffs in school. After all, research shows that children who sing/dance/act/play their little hearts out are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement compared with their non-performing friends — and they tend to have enhanced cognitive, motor, and social development to boot. But the benefits don't end there. Getting up on stage can enrich your child's life in all sorts of surprising ways.**

**Kids Who Perform Are Quick Thinkers**

**They Master Their Anxiety**

**Performers Express Brand-New Emotions**

**Their Self-Esteem Can Soar**

**Performers See the World in a Whole New Way**

# Kids Corner



## Resolutions for Kids

**9** Hours of Sleep  
**8** Mins of connection  
**7** Bouts of laughter

**6** Mins of planning  
**5** cups of water

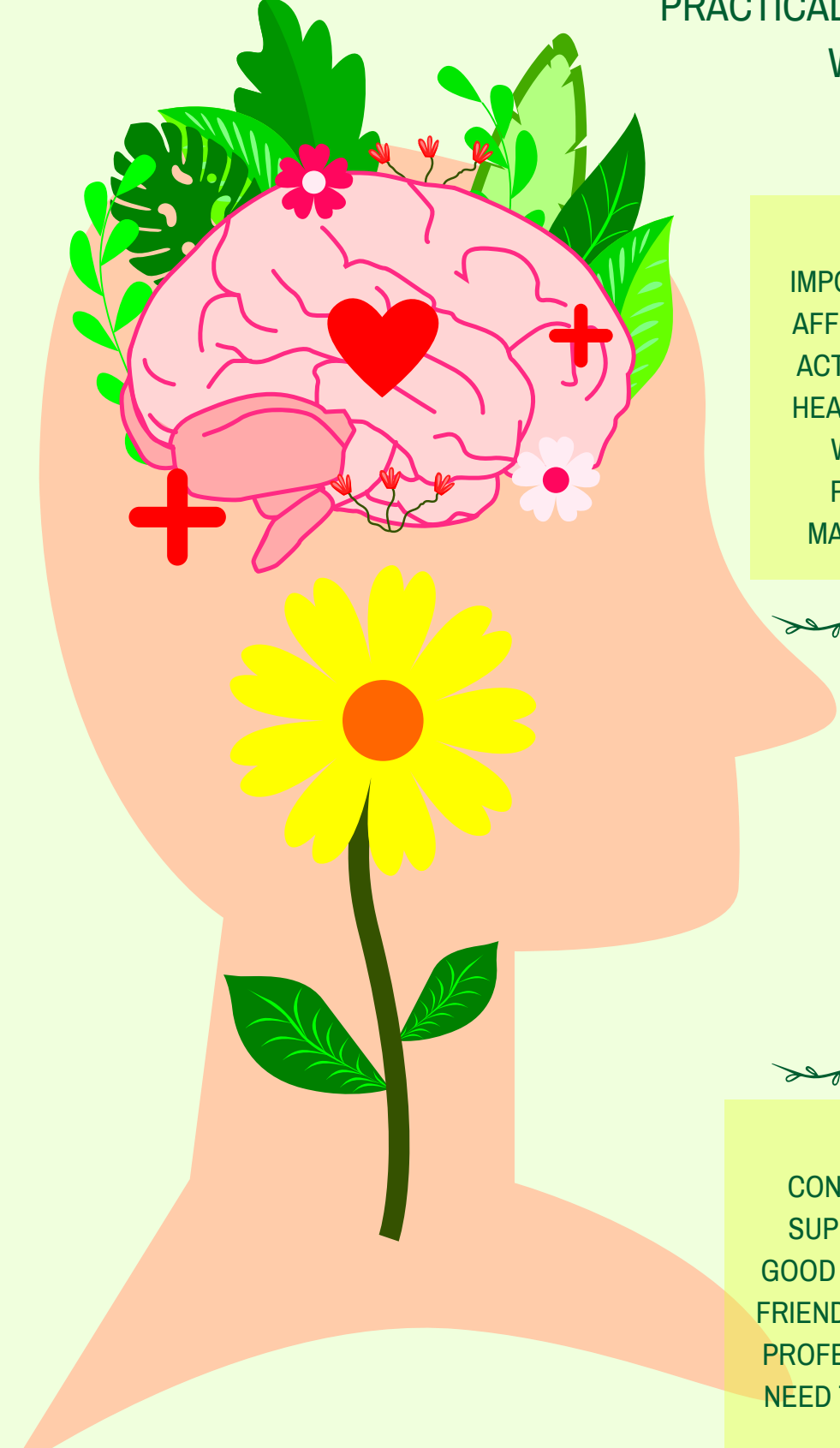
**4** Portions of fruit/veggies  
**3** ways of helping

**2** Books of reading  
**1** Hour of exercise

# MENTAL HEALTH

# TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR EVERYDAY WELL-BEING

An illustration of a human head profile in shades of orange and pink. Inside the head, a pink brain is shown with a red heart in the center. Three red plus signs are placed around the brain. The brain is surrounded by various green leaves and flowers, including a pink flower, a white flower, and a yellow daisy. A large yellow daisy is also shown growing from the neck area of the head profile.

MENTAL HEALTH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH. IT AFFECTS HOW WE THINK, FEEL, AND ACT. TAKING CARE OF OUR MENTAL HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL FOR OVERALL WELL-BEING. HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP YOU MAINTAIN GOOD MENTAL HEALTH.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE. TAKE TIME TO DO THINGS THAT YOU ENJOY, SUCH AS READING A BOOK, TAKING A WALK, OR HAVING A RELAXING BATH. PRIORITIZING SELF-CARE CAN HELP REDUCE STRESS AND IMPROVE MOOD.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS. HAVING A SUPPORT SYSTEM IS CRUCIAL FOR GOOD MENTAL HEALTH. REACH OUT TO FRIENDS, FAMILY, OR A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL (COUNSELORS) IF YOU NEED TO TALK OR RECEIVE GUIDANCE.





# Beauty & Wellness Corner

## Personal Hygiene

Good health habits and personal hygiene are essential life skills.

Hygiene for Teens: Good Habits

The following is a list of hygienic habits your teen should be engaging in:

- Showering or bathing every day.
- Washing hands with soap and water often.
- Washing hair regularly.
- Brushing hair every day and getting haircuts when needed.
- Brushing teeth twice a day.
- Flossing once a day.
- Shaving regularly (for boys obviously).
- Changing underwear daily and wearing clean clothes.
- Avoiding habits that involve putting hands into the mouth (e.g., fingernail biting).
- Clipping and grooming fingernails and toenails regularly.
- Using personal hygiene products correctly - facial acne cleansers, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, etc.
- Taking care of injuries until they are healed.



**Your child needs to keep themselves clean to remain healthy and to feel good about themselves.**

**Good personal hygiene will help boost their self-esteem and confidence.**

**We all need to keep clean to avoid harmful germs and avoid getting sick. Good personal hygiene also boosts confidence by dealing with problems like bad breath or body odor.**

**You may have to help your child learn and practise good personal hygiene habits. These will become even more important as they grow older and approach puberty.**

**Being able to talk openly and honestly about keeping clean is important. This will help you manage more difficult personal hygiene issues that are likely to come up when they are teenagers.**

# THESE HABITS COULD HARM YOUR BRAIN

**1** Slacking off

**2** Consuming too much sugar

**3**

Having too much screen time on social media

**7**  
Lack of social contacts



**4** Having sedentary life style

**6** listening to loud music for too long

**5** Not having enough sleep

# DECEMBER

## Highlights

### Winter Wishes

Thanks to our generous Sponsors - ALL students were able to receive their requested gifts in December 2023.

### Winter Celebrations

Students & teachers participated in "Ugly Sweater" day. Students also attended a Winter Ball.

### Project Green Reach

Graded 6 started their semester long in-class hands-on, inquiry based science lessons with their science teacher and our partners at Brooklyn Botanical Garden.



FOLLOW US ON  
INSTAGRAM FOR MORE  
HIGHLIGHTS





NEXT MONTH  
GOALS

HEALTH IS  
WEALTH

EAT  
MORE  
GREENS

LOVE LIFE

BE FEARLESSLY AUTHENTIC

FEEL THE MOMENTS

CHERISH FAMILY  
PHOTOGRAPHS

STAY POSITIVE  
AND HAPPY

SELF AWARENESS

BE CURIOUS

NO REGRETS

USE LESS PLASTIC

THE MORE WE TALK, THE MORE  
WE UNDERSTAND

DON'T KILL THE  
FIDDLE FIG