



Levittown LEADER

Celebrating MENTAL WELLNESS

Every day at Levittown schools students are socially and emotionally enriched with mental wellness at the core of many lessons and programs. Each school offers an environment of inclusion where all students can belong and gain positive experiences with their peers and mentors. Students are equipped with the skills needed to live an active, healthy and happy lifestyle, and lessons on acceptance shape the way they view the world around them now and into the future.

While students learn and practice mental and physical wellness during school hours, many programs have also been made available for families to join and learn how to best support their child as they progress through various stages in their life.

Positive lessons on mental health are woven into numerous lessons across varying subjects, emphasizing the importance of such a topic, especially as students go through their childhood and teenage years. The focus on mental wellness throughout classrooms, lessons and programs enables students to have a strong foundation of living healthily and positively.

In a partnership with Northwell Health, two powerful presentations were brought to Levittown families. Cohen Children's Medical Center, South Oaks Hospital and Zucker Hillside Hospital invited all to join "Demystifying Mental Health." The presentation, held in March, aimed to explore myths and offered information about prevalent mental health conditions in children. A panel of experts, including South Oaks Program Director Jaclene Jason, Ph.D., and Director of Social Work and Therapeutic Services Gina Molinet, LCSW, shared signs, symptoms and treatment resources for various mental health issues. With the help of the panel, families were able to tackle often taboo subjects and see what conditions like depression and anxiety might look like in their kids.

Northwell Health experts also presented "Addressing Stress and Trauma in Families," taking a more focused approach to how traumatic experiences can continue to affect children's lives. Families learned coping skills, how to open conversations about trauma and were provided professional resources to support those in need.



The Challenger Homecoming basketball game, hosted at General Douglas MacArthur High School and joined by Jonas E. Salk Middle School students in the ABA program, was an opportunity for the team to feel included and accepted.



Students at Summit Lane Elementary School wore silly hats to kick off Mental Health Awareness Month.

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Our own Levittown LEADD Committee – that’s Levittown Leaders Against Destructive Decisions – also hosted an in-house event focusing on mental wellness. All K-12 students and their families were welcome to join the virtual Family Mindfulness Night. Two sessions were offered for grades K to 5 and 6 to 12 students and all family members were encouraged to join – even grandparents and pets. It was a relaxing night when the Levittown community came together to relax, breathe, bond and share their favorite wellness activities.

The YES Community Counseling Center, which provides resources to the district throughout the year, hosted “The Role of Parents in Mental Health: Understanding the Strong Connection of Parental Health to Children’s Mental Health.” During this virtual presentation, powerful resources were shared with families emphasizing how their own health greatly impacts their child’s. Parents are kids’ No. 1 role model – healthy habits practiced by parents can set the foundation for that child carrying the same healthy practices throughout

their life. Parents who also keep dialogue about mental health open help their child express their feelings and sustain a positive mindset.

A culmination of weeks of practices and celebrations in each school was found in the Waves of Positivity Night for students in grades 6 to 8. At the Levittown Memorial Education Center, students surfed a wave of positive thoughts and actions through journaling, vision boards, mindfulness, mood boosters, brain power challenges and Reason2Smile service activities.

While districtwide events offer beneficial resources to families, students learn about and practice mental wellness routines in class every day. Throughout the month of March, which was Mental Health Awareness Month, the LEADD Committee encouraged all schools to create daily activities to support mental health.

Coining the month as “Mindful March,” Summit Lane Elementary School students were challenged to complete activities that filled out a bingo-style board. Students had several options to help boost their day,

including dancing, reading, drawing, taking a walk and more. They tried to complete five in a row across the board to bring back to school and show their teachers.

Throughout the first week of March, Summit Lane also kicked off Mental Health Awareness Month by dressing for the occasion. Classes included wellness activities, including yoga in physical education and read-aloud sessions. Summit Lane teachers also gathered for a special event that included insight on exercise and nutrition along with a workout session.

At Northside School, March was kicked off with an open discussion about mental health, which then repeated every week for Talk About It Tuesdays. Each week also started with Mindfulness Mondays and ended with Feel Good Fridays, during which students practiced breathing techniques, coping skills and shared compliments with one another.

Students at Jonas E. Salk and Wisdom Lane middle schools stepped up and participated in a packed month of mental health-focused activities. A wide range of

activities were suggested, including writing a thank-you email to a staff member or reading an inspirational quote over the loudspeaker. In science classes, students also answered the question, “What on Earth are you thankful for?” Over the weekends, other activities were encouraged, such as cuddling with a pet or baking a sweet treat.

Division Avenue and General Douglas MacArthur students also enjoyed a similarly packed month. On Mondays, for example, they practiced movement and mindfulness with stretching and calming exercises. Digital Detox Tuesdays challenged students to stay away from social media and various devices that are often distractions. Clubs also had the opportunity to promote themselves on Fridays, and students enjoyed social visits with one another in the cafeteria.

In each school, social workers assist students with their daily struggles as well, acting as an always-available resource to the school community. There is always a space in Levittown schools for students to express themselves and overcome any hurdle.

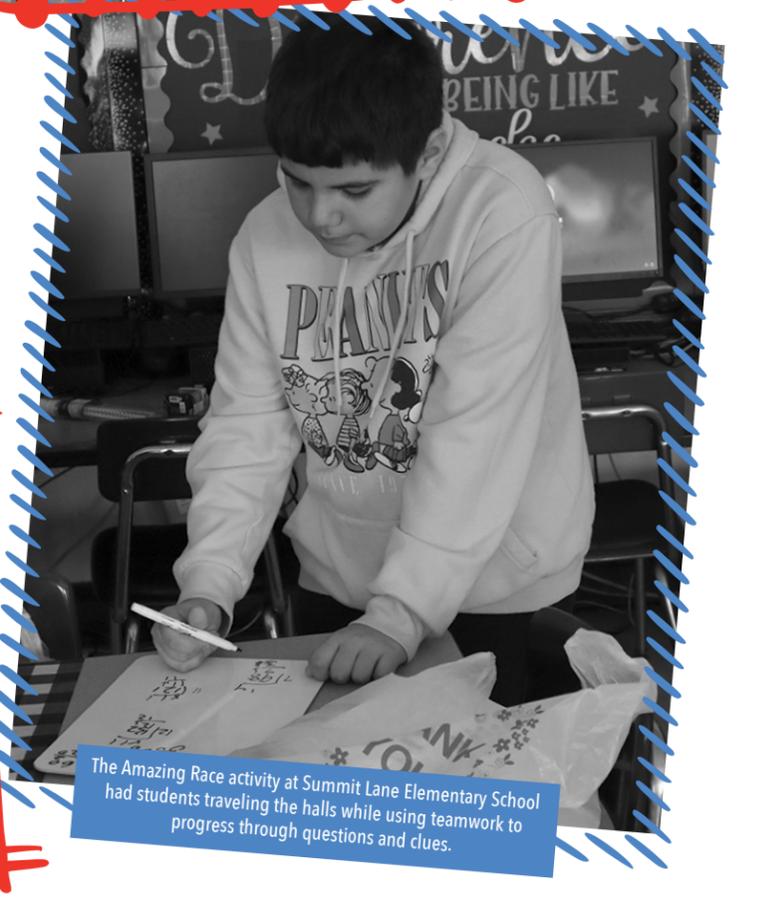


Students in grades 6 through 8 from Jonas E. Salk and Wisdom Lane middle schools hosted the Waves of Positivity event, aimed at promoting mental well-being and healthy habits.



Girls were able to pick out their perfect prom dress thanks to the prom boutique organized by social workers and volunteers from throughout the district.

Students from Abbey Lane and Summit Lane elementary schools highlighted their character education programs in which they learned how to combat bullying and create positive learning environments.



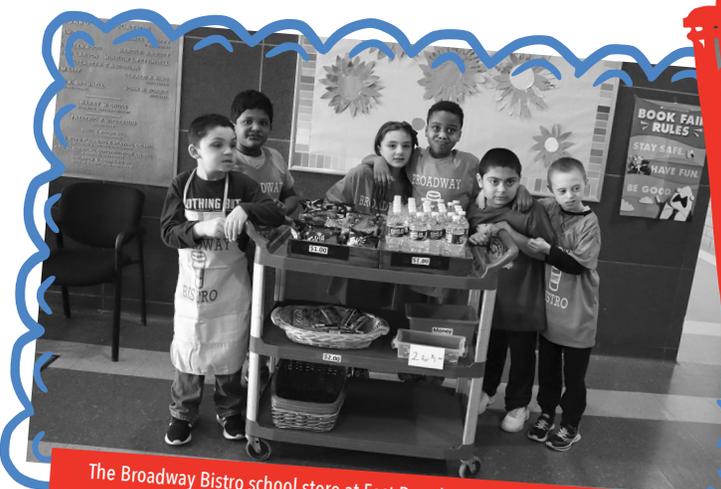
The Amazing Race activity at Summit Lane Elementary School had students traveling the halls while using teamwork to progress through questions and clues.

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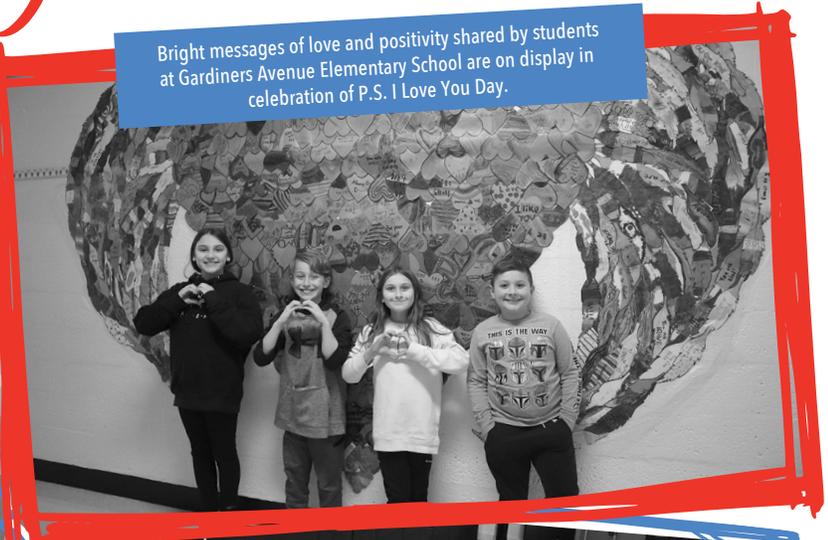
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The Broadway Bistro school store at East Broadway Elementary School has proven to be an excellent educational resource for students in the ABA program.



Bright messages of love and positivity shared by students at Gardiners Avenue Elementary School are on display in celebration of P.S. I Love You Day.



Abbey Lane Get a Voice Club members Maks Gospodarzec and Maria Kerr talked about student-led character education lessons at the March Board of Education meeting. The purpose of the club is to build a school community where all students feel safe, valued, respected and connected to each other.



As part of their celebration of March as Mental Health Awareness Month, Lee Road students integrated yoga into their routines. Students worked on their balance, strength and flexibility while improving their focus and concentration.

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