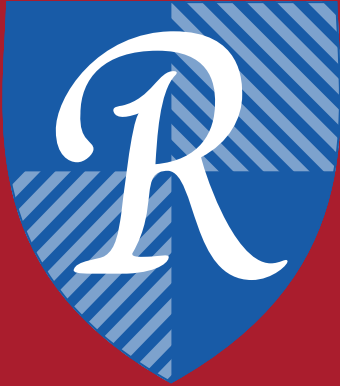


FALL 2021



# REECE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Reece School, 25 East 104th Street, New York, NY 10029  
(212) 289-4872 Follow us: [www.reeceschool.org](http://www.reeceschool.org)

## THE PUMPKIN ROLLS AGAIN!



We excitedly welcomed back our annual Pumpkin Roll celebration on October 29th! On this special day, students and staff showed off their creative costumes and spent the morning participating in Pumpkin Roll competitions in Central Park, followed by trick or treating and Cohort Spirit Day activities in the afternoon. We especially want to congratulate classes 311 and 611 for winning their respective Pumpkin Rolls! We are so thrilled to have this tradition back at Reece!



Dear Families and Friends,

*It is hard to believe that we are a little over a third into the school year. Before we know it, we will be in June and our older students will be moving on.*

*This is the perfect time to reflect on the first few months of school, set additional goals, celebrate small and big victories, and learn from challenges we have encountered.*

*We continue to emphasize health and safety by suggesting everyone get a vaccine, complete random testing, encourage washing hands and keeping our mask on while at Reece.*

*As we move into the holiday season, remember to be grateful for what we have, hold a door, lend a helping hand, and always assume best intentions. In a world where there is so much uncertainty, try to focus on what we can control. There is a lot to be thankful for this holiday season and a lot we can learn from the past year.*

*I want to thank all of the students, staff and parents for your support of Reece.*

*Stay safe and healthy,*

Dr. Duncan  
Executive Director

## SUNSHINE CLUB IS BACK!



Although it has been on pause since March 2020, we are happy to be reinstating our Sunshine Club this year! Sunshine Club was created by Reece employees as a way to build a positive and supportive community among the staff through various activities and events. We look forward to supporting our staff this year through monthly staff meals, after school events, and other activities that will provide us time to safely share together, back as one school community.



## THE MEMORY GARDEN COMES BACK TO LIFE



Last summer, students worked together to revitalize the Reece School Memory Garden. During our Day of Service, Reece middle schoolers and moving on students spent the day cleaning out the garden, weeding, sweeping, and preparing the beds for planting. They also helped plant flowers, a small vegetable garden, and our sensory herb garden.

Throughout the summer and fall, students enjoyed watering and tending to the garden. This job provided an opportunity for a full body movement break as well as a sense of pride and responsibility for maintaining the garden. Students also used the sensory garden for their breaktimes, enjoying smelling the orange balm, mint, lavender, thyme, oregano, basil, and lemon verbena. Many students were able to incorporate this space into their daily schedules.

We hope to bring the Memory Garden back to life this Spring. It has been a beautiful addition to the school for students and faculty alike! Thank you to everyone for your efforts to make the Garden come to life.

## ALPHA COMES HOME

After living on the Upper West side for a year and a half during the pandemic, Alpha, our school pet, is back in the Science room, his Reece School home. He went all out this year, dressing as a Reece School graduate for Halloween. He's very proud to represent the school and its excellence. Congrats little dude! Everyone loves you and is very happy that you're back.



We are so excited that So Fun City is back at Reece for an 8 week residency! The students have spent the past few weeks with Josh and Sarah, from So Fun City, learning new magic tricks, as well as playing group games. The students have had an opportunity to problem solve, demonstrate teamwork and cheer each other on. They get to keep their magic trick items so they can practice any time!

*"I like the magic tricks they teach us, because they're really cool and fun!" We can't wait for the final show on our own private YouTube Channel!!*

- Nicky, Class 410



## MORNING ANNOUNCERS

One aspect of the school day that we've all been excited to reintroduce since returning to in-person learning is our student led, daily morning announcements! From the birthday shout outs to the joke of the day, our dedicated group of volunteer morning announcers have enthusiastically kicked off each school day for our students and staff on a positive note! We thank our morning announcers for their time and dedication and welcome additional volunteers!

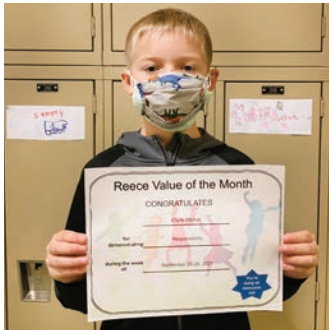






## VALUE OF THE MONTH and COHORT SPIRIT DAY

Our Value of the Month system is an important aspect of our social-emotional curriculum at Reece. In the first few months of the school year, classroom and school-wide initiatives focused on the themes of *Responsibility, Empathy, Effort, and Community*. Each of these themes played an integral role in our coming back to school as one community. We would like to give a big shout out to our students who have received the Value of the Month certificate for going above and beyond in demonstrating that month's value in their classroom. In January, we will be focusing on the concept of *Enthusiasm* as we kick off a new year filled with new possibilities, and in February, *Self-Esteem*.



### UPCOMING COHORT SPIRIT DAYS:

**December 23:** Dress as your favorite holiday

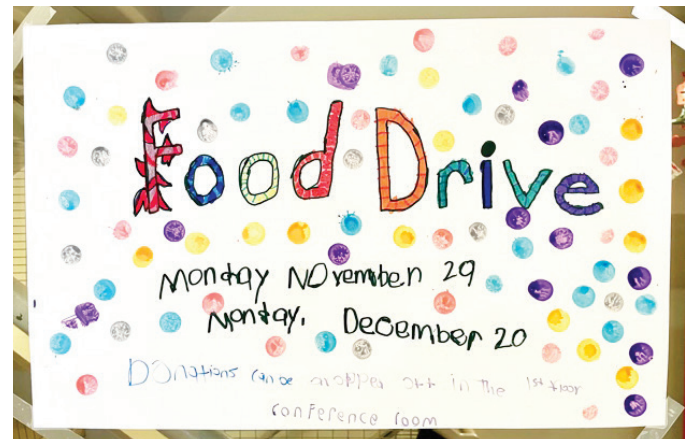
**January 28:** Pajama Day

**February 17:** Reece Rules! Wear your  
Reece gear and Reece colors

## It's not too late!

The red cohort is hosting a food drive to benefit City Harvest. They are collecting non-perishable food items and it's not too late to participate! Items can be sent to school with your student through December 20th.

*"We chose to do this because since Covid began, things have been harder and we want to help. 1 out of 3 kids are experiencing food insecurity in NYC right now. The most-needed items are: Canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, boxed macaroni and cheese, cereal, proteins (tuna+beans), juice and soups. Thank you for your help!"*



## Celebrating World Kindness Day



World Kindness Day, which was celebrated on November 13th, is a global day that promotes the importance of being kind to ourselves, others, and the world around us. This coincides with our philosophy of being "REECE-spectful" to ourselves, others, and our environment. Each day at Reece, we encourage this among our students and recognize these meaningful moments through positive praise. Whether it be a random act of kindness towards another, taking time for needed self-care, or planning a larger initiative, such as a food drive or volunteering to help with the Central Park clean-up, we are so proud of our students when they shine with kindness!



## New Curriculum Initiatives at Reece

Reece School administration and the Curriculum Committee have added extra support for our student body after such a difficult learning period during the pandemic. These three initiatives are designed to help with any learning gaps that may have occurred as everyone navigated a year and a half of unprecedented upheaval in education.

### Curriculum Map:

The PowerSchool and Curriculum Committee spent the 2020-2021 school year and summer months creating the Reece Curriculum Map, a detailed, state-standard aligned, school-wide academic resource. The curriculum map is setup to organize cross-content units across all grade levels, so the students are learning the same topics in all grades, specific to their instructional levels. The committee continues to gather feedback to edit and update the map to best reflect the needs of the students.

### MobyMax:

Reece is utilizing MobyMax, which is an adaptive curriculum program, to assist us in closing learning gaps due to the pandemic period by providing individualized instruction. The students and the staff members have been utilizing the program across all content areas to best support the students. We will continue to collect and analyze data throughout the year to adjust lessons and assignments.



### Wilson:

A cohort of staff members completed the intensive Wilson Reading System introductory course this past summer and have been implementing the instruction throughout the start of this school year. The Wilson Reading System directly and systematically teaches the structure of the English language. Through the program, students learn fluent decoding and encoding skills to the level of mastery.



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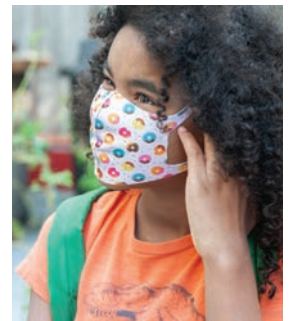
### Reece School

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## UNITY DAY 2021



We were so proud to once again support and celebrate Unity Day on October 20th! Our students and staff wore orange to show that we stand for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. October is National Bullying Prevention Month and Unity Day is one way we can send a message that no child should ever experience bullying. Throughout the day and week, classes participated in related lessons and activities, including helping to expand our stairwell Kindness Chain with messages of kindness!







## PARK CLEAN UP PROJECT

Classes 511 and 518 will clean Central Park for our community service project. The reason why we're doing this is to help our NYC community. We are prepared and eager to help our city!

- Class 511



## AND THEY'RE OFF! GO REECE RACERS

The Reece Racers are off to a strong start! In September, a mixture of current Reece students and a big group of our dedicated alumni runners showed up for "The Return of the Reece Racers" - our first event of the 2021-2022 Season! In October, the team participated in our second annual "Bat Bolt" - fueled in part by bags of candy for each of the runners! And in December we gathered for our "Holiday Hustle" - a lightly competitive sprint around the 1.66 mile Central Park Bridle Path!

The Reece Racers are currently training every Friday afternoon. We have some speedy new members on the team, and can't wait to see them build stamina and strength in the upcoming months. Along with building physical skills, participation on the team requires a great deal of commitment, responsibility, and a willingness to bring a positive attitude to every practice! Team work and generosity of spirit are at the heart of The Reece Racers and together we will get over some steep hills and challenging miles! **GO REECE RACERS!**

## Marathon Excitement

On Friday, November 5th, our current Reece Racers completed the 1.5-mile Virtual Rising New York Road Runners Invitational ahead of the TCS NYC Marathon. Each of our dedicated runners put forth their best effort and received an official Rising New York Road Runners finisher certificate upon completion!



*\* Special congratulations go to Reece Racers coaches Charlotte Dooling and Kaitlin McGovern upon their completion of the 2021 TCS NYC Marathon! We're so proud! You are amazing!!*







## WELCOME NEW STAFF!

Reece is pleased to extend a big welcome to our new staff members. Thank you for the hard work and dedication that you have shown since your arrival.



**Phylicia Abrams**  
Teacher, Class 214

Hi, my name is Phylicia Abrams and I will be the new teacher for the Blue Cohort alongside Shawnette Adams. This will be my first year teaching at Reece School, but I have over seven years of experience with teaching a variety of different ages. I love baking, crocheting, and trips to the supermarket. I'm excited to join the team and can't wait to exchange ideas/recipes!

My name is Justin Maurer! I was once a student here at Reece, graduating back with the Class of 2009. I graduated from SUNY Cortland with my Bachelor's degree in K-12 Physical Education.



**Justin Maurer**  
TA, Class 311



**Shawnette Adams**  
TA, Class 214

Hi, my name is Shawnette Adams. I am a Teacher Assistant at the Reece School. In my spare time I enjoy different arts and crafts.

Hi! My name is Blake Wiener. I am so excited to be at the Reece School! I have been in the field of Education for over 20 years. I love working with children. It is a joy to watch them grow and develop. I recently graduated from Fordham University with a Master's degree in Early Childhood and Special Education. In my free time I love to take walks in Central Park, read, and watch old movies. I look forward to working with all your children and meeting you soon!



**Blake Wiener**  
Teacher, Class 310

This year I am new to Reece! I am currently finishing up my Master's Degree in Special Education this spring. I am originally from Long Island, but moved to New York City this year! I am very excited for what is to come this school year.



**Jessica Grubman**  
Teacher, Class 210



**Sakina Mandviwala**  
Full-time Substitute

My name is Sakina Mandviwala. I have been in the Reece School from 2015, as a substitute teacher. I have been an English Braille Teacher, in India, from 1977 to 2002. It is indeed a matter of pleasure and privilege that since September 2021, I have been employed as a full-time permanent substitute in the Reece School. I love to knit and crochet.

My name is Tom Boyle and I have been a special education teacher for 20 years. I have taught students ages 5- 21 years old during my career. I am an avid sports fan and still enjoy playing on intramural teams, even though my wife says I am too old. The most important things in life are family and friends. I will end with a quote that I live by, "It's not whether you get knocked down; it's whether you get up." -Vince Lombardi



**Tom Boyle**  
Teacher, Class 412



**Briana Weatherly**  
Behavior Support

My name is Briana Weatherly and I'm new to the Reece School as a behavior support professional, a sometimes challenging yet very rewarding job. I graduated in 2020 with a Bachelor's in psychology from The University at Albany and have since been wanting to pursue a career in mental health. I don't have any previous experience working in schools, but I've worked at mental health facilities and day habilitation programs for adults. Since working at Reece, it's inspired me to continue working with children and soon start a graduate program to be a counselor or a therapist. In my free time I enjoy traveling, theater, and outdoor activities such as biking and hiking.

*Continued on page 7*





My name is Brian Maurer. I am the Teacher Assistant to the Music Teacher here at the Reece School. I am also a former student and graduated from Reece in 2009. I recently graduated from SUNY Oneonta with a bachelor's degree in Music Industry.



**Brian Maurer**  
Music TA

Hello! My name is Bria Mitchell-Gillespie and I am so excited to be the new Occupational Therapist at the Reece School! I received my doctorate in Occupational Therapy in 2020 from the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions. I currently work in clinical practice in inpatient and outpatient pediatric settings, clinical research focused on health technology development, and as a Term Lecturer for my graduate school. In my free time I enjoy cooking, watching foreign films, and catching up with my friends and family. I'm so excited to get to know and work with your students!



**Bria Mitchell-Gillespie**  
Occupational Therapy

My name is Naliesha Jabbar. I am a current graduate of The Metropolitan College of New York City where I received a master's degree in Early Elementary Education and a dual degree in Special Education. I have been teaching for over 5 years and in those years, I have developed a passion for teaching that has continued as I progress in the career. I started off as a pre-school teacher, then I moved on to working with kids with severe disabilities. In my free time, my hobbies include reading, shopping, hiking, cooking, and traveling.



**Naliesha Jabbar**  
Teacher, Class 212



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