

## Rochelle Park News and Events

November 2025

### GRATITUDE AND GROWTH: A SEASON OF THANKS AND LEARNING

As we head into Thanksgiving break, this month we've been focusing on gratitude in many ways - taking time to appreciate one another, our school community, and the small moments that make a big difference each day. Now that we're well into our third month of school, routines are established, connections are growing, and students are making meaningful progress academically, socially, and personally.

November is a perfect time to pause and reflect - celebrating growth, recognizing acts of kindness, and appreciating the ongoing partnership between families, staff, and sending districts. We're grateful for your continued support and collaboration as we work together to help each student learn, grow, and thrive.

### HONORING THANKFULNESS IN OUR COMMUNITY

#### Gratitude Grove: Leaves of Appreciation

Our monthly community initiative continues with the celebration of National Gratitude Month. Throughout November, students, faculty, and staff have been reflecting on the things they are thankful for and sharing them in meaningful ways. Everyone had the opportunity to write their messages of gratitude on paper leaves, then added to our Kindness Board. This display has now blossomed into our very own Gratitude Grove, a beautiful reminder of the many things that bring joy and appreciation to our school community. In addition to the Gratitude Grove, inspiring quotes about thankfulness and appreciation are posted throughout the building, encouraging daily reflection and a culture of mindfulness. These efforts not only highlight the importance of recognizing what we are grateful for, but also foster a supportive, positive environment.



#### Letters of Gratitude

This month, Mrs. DiLorenzo gave our students a chance to say thank you in a really special way. Students created cards and letters for veterans, sharing messages of gratitude and appreciation for all they've done for our country. These heartfelt notes were delivered to local veterans' organizations, spreading thanks throughout our community. It was wonderful to see our students thinking about others and taking the time to make a difference. It's a small act, but one that means a lot. Taking the time to reflect on service and express thanks helps our students connect with something bigger than themselves - and reminds all of us how important it is to show appreciation for those who have sacrificed so much.



## CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AND KINDNESS

### National Honor Society Inductees Shine Bright

This quarter, we are proud to recognize our newest National Honor Society inductees - students who have demonstrated outstanding scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Their commitment to academic excellence and dedication to making a positive impact in our school community set them apart as true role models. These students have consistently gone above and beyond in the classroom and beyond, showing initiative in both learning and leadership opportunities. Congratulations to each of our NHS inductees for achieving this prestigious honor and for inspiring others to strive for excellence.



### Spreading Positivity Every Day

Alongside academic achievements, we celebrate students who have exemplified compassion and generosity through our Kindness Award for Quarter 1. These students have gone out of their way to support peers, foster an inclusive environment, and brighten the days of those around them. Whether through small acts of encouragement or consistent efforts to make our school a welcoming place, their actions remind us all of the power of empathy and kindness. We are proud to honor these students and thank them for setting such a positive example for the entire school community.



## FROM FEAR TO FUNCTION: TEACHERS DISCOVER THE POWER OF AI

Last month, Rochelle Park and Mahwah faculty came together to explore new ways technology can support teaching and learning. Teachers from both campuses participated in a Professional Development workshop focused on using artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom. The session was led by a highly recommended presenter from the Bergen County Special Services ETTC (Educational Technology) division, whose workshops have been praised by many local educators.

Titled Fear to Function: Using AI to Inspire Thinking, Creating & Learning, the workshop provided practical strategies for teachers to harness AI in ways that spark creativity, uphold academic integrity, and enhance student learning. Participants explored how to teach responsible AI use, design assignments that encourage critical thinking, and tailor instruction to meet the needs of every learner. In addition to learning about the potential of AI, teachers had the opportunity to try out tools and



techniques they could immediately apply in their classrooms. By the end of the session, educators walked away with actionable ideas to make AI an ethical, empowering, and exciting part of teaching and learning. Coming together across campuses allowed staff to share insights, support one another, and strengthen the professional community - proving innovation in education grows best when we learn together.



## SPOOKTACULAR HALLOWEEN FUN

### Halloween Haunts & Highlights

Halloween came alive with a day full of costumes, candy, and creepy fun! Students and staff showed off everything from spooky to silly outfits, filling the halls with creativity and excitement. The fun continued in the gym, where the Student Council hosted the annual Halloween Party. Candy and snacks were everywhere, Mrs. Carbone led pumpkin and mask painting, and Mr. Milon's legendary Haunted House had students tiptoeing through darkness, jumping at teachers in scary masks popping out at every turn. Classic games brought even more laughter - students raced to wrap friends as mummies, strutted their stuff in the Best Costume Runway Walk, and tried to guess the number of treats in a jar. As a special surprise, the cast of the upcoming musical Mean Girls gave a sneak peek that wowed everyone. Halloween was a thrilling reminder of our creative spirit, school pride, and the joy of coming together for scares - and lots of laughs!

### Faculty Kick Off the Spooky Season

Faculty and staff kicked off the Halloween spirit early with a festive potluck! Everyone brought their best creepy, creative dishes, from "poison apple" puffs to "worms in dirt." Laughter and spooky decorations filled the room, making it a fun kickoff to the season. This event was a great reminder that Halloween wasn't just for students - our staff mixed creativity, teamwork, and a little friendly competition to make the season unforgettable.



### CREATING A SAFER, SMARTER CAMPUS

Our campus is always evolving to provide a safe, comfortable, and welcoming environment. Led by Mr. Rich, Custodian/Maintenance, the facilities team has completed several key projects to enhance both functionality and the overall experience for students, staff, and visitors:



- **New Main-Floor Bathroom** – Converted a previously unused closet into a bright, functional space.
- **Fire Safety** – Replaced three sets of fire doors and added fire alarm strobe lights in every room.
- **Improved Air Quality** – Upgraded to high-efficiency HEPA filters, purifying air 99.5% more effectively.
- **Gym Upgrades** – Installed new window shades for better lighting control.

These improvements create a cleaner, safer, and more welcoming campus, reflecting our ongoing commitment to supporting learning and growth.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: MRS. PICANO

This month, we're excited to shine the spotlight on Mrs. Picano, who has been an important part of the Sage community for 11 years. Over that time, she's taken on many roles - associate teacher in several classes, Writing Workshop, College & Career, and Culinary instructor in the afternoons. When Ms. Berowitz is out, you can often find her at the front desk lending a hand. She also leads the morning announcements and helps coordinate the many fun trips our students enjoy throughout the year.



### **What inspired you to join the Sage team?**

Mrs. Picano says, "I've always loved supporting students both academically and personally. Helping them discover their strengths, build confidence, and get ready for their future - whether that's college, a career, or life beyond the classroom - is really rewarding. What drew me to Sage is the close-knit, supportive community and the chance to connect with students in so many meaningful ways every day."

### **What do you enjoy most about working with our students?**

"One of my favorite parts of working at Sage is our traditions with the students," Mrs. Picano shares. "From the Halloween party to the school-wide Thanksgiving feast, which my culinary class helps prepare, to the musicals and plays - these experiences bring us together and create lasting memories. That's what I love most about working with our students."

### **A little-known fact about you:**

Mrs. Picano loves the outdoors. "Camping, hiking, swimming - anything that lets me connect with nature. Recently, my family bought a camper, and it's been one of the best purchases ever. There's nothing like getting away into nature with the people I love and enjoying that uninterrupted time together."

### **Favorite motto or piece of advice:**

Her current guiding principle is the "Let-Them Theory": "It's about letting people make their own choices - how they act, what they say, or what they think of you - without trying to control or chase after them. It protects your peace, reveals true connections, frees you from unnecessary drama, empowers you, and builds healthier relationships when you let people be who they are."

We're so grateful for Mrs. Picano and all the energy, care, and positivity she brings to our students and the Sage community every day!

## CULINARY TRADITIONS WITH MRS. PICANO

As we head into Thanksgiving, our Sage community is gearing up for one of our favorite traditions - the school-wide Thanksgiving Feast! The sides for the feast are being thoughtfully prepared by Mrs. Picano and her talented culinary students. From savory dishes to seasonal favorites, their creativity and hard work help make this annual event a delicious celebration of community. The feast is more than just a meal - it's a chance for students, staff, and families to come together, share in tradition, and celebrate all that we're grateful for. Watching our students take pride in their work is a perfect example of the hands-on, student-centered learning that makes Sage so special. Photos and a full article about the feast will appear in next month's newsletter!



## STAY CONNECTED

Want to see more of the moments that make Rochelle Park special? Follow our Facebook page, Sage Alliance, for daily glimpses into classroom activities, student achievements, and community events.

### Easy Access

Scan the QR code to connect instantly or search **Sage Alliance** on **Facebook** and join our growing online community!



## ROCHELLE PARK PARENT & CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

**NEXT MEETING  
TUESDAY,  
DECEMBER 9TH  
7:00 - 8:00PM**

**2026 Meeting Dates to  
be announced**

*2nd Tuesday of each month*

Contact Tara Fries for Zoom link: [tfries@sageday.com](mailto:tfries@sageday.com)



## Save the Date!

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM  
SAGE ROCHELLE PARK



**Join us for a fun evening with:**

- Therapy Dogs from Operation K9 Beethoven
- Pizza and Salad
- Hot Chocolate Bar



Learn more about Operation K9 Beethoven:  
<https://operationk9beethoven.com>

## SUPPORTING EVERY STUDENT'S JOURNEY

We know every student's path is unique. Our flexible intake and onboarding process ensures a smooth transition by focusing on:

- **Individualized support** – Tailored plans designed to meet each student's needs.
- **Collaboration** – Close partnership between our leadership team, families, and school districts.
- **Inclusive environment** – A welcoming community where students can connect and feel supported from day one.
- **Strong foundation** – Helping students thrive academically, therapeutically, and personally.

**For out-of-district referrals or consultations, please contact our Clinical Director,  
Margo Adelsberg, at [madelsberg@sageday.com](mailto:madelsberg@sageday.com).**