

Diving Deep in the Zone



Diving Deep in the Zone is Zone 126's monthly newsletter featuring stories and highlights from across our community in Astoria and Long Island City's zip codes

11101, 11102, and 11106.

--Zone 126 Team

#GIVING
TUESDAY

Before you read...

- Zone 126 will be hosting our annual Cocoa Mingle on December 20- please consider [purchasing](#) a book for a child this holiday season
- More information about Cocoa Mingle and our Amazon wish list are linked [here](#)



Join Zone 126 as a dedicated partner this [#GivingTuesday](#) as we continue to build Cradle-to-Career Community Schools in Astoria and Long Island City, fostering a culture of shared responsibility for student success.

Integrating supports for academics, health, parent education, youth, and community development will lead to improved student achievement, increased parent involvement, and a healthier community. Giving Tuesday is a global day of generosity and giving back to your community. Let's transform our local community together!

www.zone126.org/donate

DONATE!

Reciprocity Matters: Getting Hyperlocal to Support Local Businesses and Community Schools

by Anthony Lopez, Executive Director

WHY BUY LOCAL?



Source: localfirst.com

The coalition of nonprofit and school partners that bring Zone 126's work to life know all too well that in a period of economic contraction—and yes, it's coming—neighborhoods are on the front lines in dealing with residents of increased unemployment. In western Queens, the likelihood is that the front lines may be between the Queensborough and RFK bridges, west of 21st Street and end at the river's edge.

Finding ways for area residents living in concentrated poverty to co-exist with gentrification in Astoria and Long Island City requires the right mix of global and local policy solutions where citizens look to each other to build and sustain both the local economy and its learning institutions. It falls under the umbrella of localism—a community-grown concept and effort that is about building resiliency in a specific community, backed and sustained by a strong local economy investing in their local schools.

It also involves the mutual exchange of goods and services between people (reciprocity), an idea I presented in 2016 around creating a community-grown solutions—anchored in schools, libraries and public houses in Astoria and Long Island City. 2018 is the year to intentionally link community anchors (public housing, libraries and schools) to local businesses and unlock the power and potential of people who reside and students who learn along Astoria and Long Island City's truck route corridor to shape the local economy, improve low-performing schools in School District 30 and increase graduation rates.

As we approach the holiday season, the Zone 126 team acknowledges and gives special thanks to our nonprofit and school partners whose longstanding commitment to collaboration makes this work possible and advances our mission. In 2018, please consider joining one of Zone 126's Affinity Groups and together we can turn this idea a reality.

The future is ours to create. Happy Holidays.

News from the Zone

Pipeline Update



Engaging Parents for Strong Beginnings

by Dylan Woloszczuk, Community School Coordinator CS 111Q

Community School Coordinator Ms. Dylan Woloszczuk has the opportunity to collaborate with many staff members at CS 111Q each day to encourage family engagement. One such staff member is Mrs. Jenill West, Parent Coordinator at CS 111Q. Mrs. West has been with CS 111Q since March 2015. The Parent Coordinator role comes with many responsibilities. Mrs. West reflects, "[I] do workshops, hold meetings with the parents, assist the Parent Teacher Association, [and] create the school calendar, newsletter, and flyers to keep the parents updated with all school events."



CS 111Q Logo

Mrs. West has high hopes for the level of Pre-K parent participation and engagement this year. She reports, "I believe this year we have had the most Pre-K parents involved [with the school], especially at the Scholar of the Month Award Celebrations." Hosting the Scholar of the Month Celebrations, in which scholars are formally presented with a certificate, is one way that Mrs. West has engaged families this year. She also reports she continues to invite Pre-K parents to all school events, which she states has worked to engage families in the past. Mrs. West noted that involving Pre-K parents in positive, exciting school functions such as the Spring and Winter concerts makes, "[families] feel like a part of the school."

She plans to continue to encourage Pre-K families to attend all school events for the remainder of the year. She said, "My ideal goals for Pre-K would be for 100% of the parents engaged and involved in all school events. I would love to see parents take the initiative to come volunteer [and] help in the classroom." As for scholars' futures, she states, "I think the level of dedication and commitment will carry throughout the years until the scholars graduate."



A Thriving Collaboration in its Third Year

by: Michelle Makabali, Community School Director Long Island City High School



In the month of November, IS 126Q Albert Shanker School for Visual & Performing Arts, began its third year in partnership with Community-Word Project.

This exciting residency features a writer who is partnered with a visual or theater artist. The two teaching artists collaborate with the classroom teacher to integrate arts through the curriculum. Students write poems in independently or in groups, and use a variety of mediums to express their work. They also use creative writing as a vehicle to generate dialogue, examine each other's work, and foster discussions. The cohort's students build deeper connections with one another through these experiences.

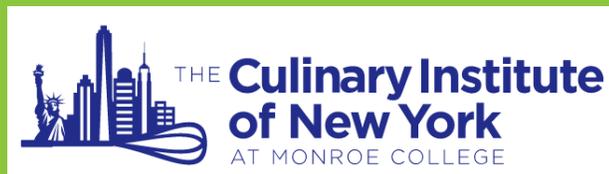
The program culminates with a student performance and a published anthology featuring students' stories, poetry and artwork. Please stay tuned to hear about the best practices in this successful collaboration and our outcomes.



A Taste of Monroe College

by Kiara Rodriguez, Community School Coordinator Long Island City High School

On October 26th, 2017, 30 Long Island City High School Juniors and Seniors traveled to the Culinary Institute of New York at Monroe College. The students, all participants of the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Program at Long Island City High School, were eager and excited as the bus arrived at the main entrance of The Dining Lab. The tour began with a demonstration of popular French dish-Sûpreme Poulet Chasseur Avec Polenta presented by Chef Enmely Soriano. The students crowded around the chef's table as she put together a beautiful dinner for two. There were audible "ooh's" and "ahh's" as she explained to them how to make the dish. Students were able to taste the food at the end of the demonstration. Excitement radiated from each student.



After the demonstration, Chef Soriano spoke to seniors interested in participating in America's Best High School Chef to discuss opportunities for tutoring and practice. America's Best High School Chef is an annual competition in which 40 high school students compete to win a full academic scholarship to the Culinary Institute of New York at Monroe College.

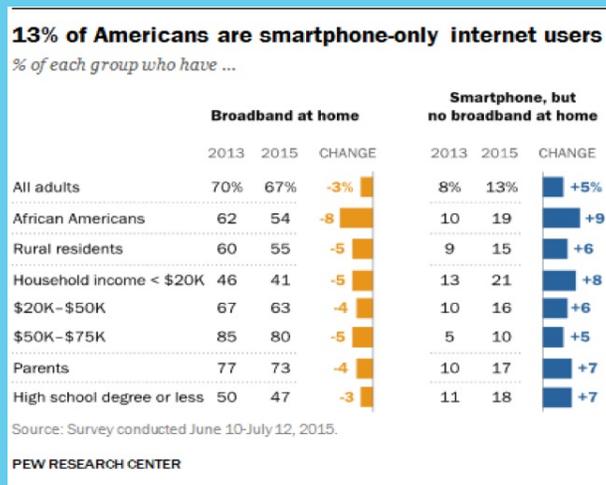
The field trip continued with a campus tour through the athletic center, the dining hall, lecture

centers, and dorms. Students discussed amongst themselves college applications, financial aid, and room and board. One student exclaimed "When I go to college I think I want to live off campus!" After the tour, I sat down with Kevin* to listen to his thoughts about the tour and college & career readiness. When asked to highlight his favorite part, he answered, "I really enjoyed seeing the bakery because I want to be a baker one day." Kevin* is in the 11th grade and is a strong example of a student who has overcome incredible obstacles to achieve success. He entered Long Island City High School as a freshman with a difficult background. With the help of his family, teachers, and Zone 126, Kevin* has managed to pivot in the right direction. He has steadily increased his attendance since 9th grade and now stands at a 93% attendance rate this school year. Kevin* expressed that becoming a chef has never felt more real and attainable. "I definitely see myself attending Monroe College in the future," said a confident Kevin*.



Sprint One Million: Closing the Digital Divide

by Andre T. Stith, Organizing Director & Michelle Makabali, Community School Director



As the lead Community Based Organization (CBO) at Long Island City High School, the Zone 126 Team have been tasked with the Sprint One Million Project through the NYCDOE.

This initiative will help high school students and their families gain access to a free wifi hotspot for students' entire high school careers. Bridging this digital divide, students will have the ability to research, complete academic assignments, and connect with their teachers via emails and messaging systems. Families can also utilize the 3GB monthly hotspot for personal use.



Even as internet access seems increasingly ubiquitous, a "digital divide" between rich and poor

remains. The rich and educated are still more likely than others to have good access to digital resources according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project. The digital divide has especially far-reaching consequences when it comes to education. For children in low-income school districts, inadequate access to technology can hinder them from learning the tech skills crucial to success in today's economy.



During the Parent Teacher Conferences at Long Island City High School, Community School Director Michelle Makabali and Organizing Director Andre Stith were able to see how families utilized the hotspot. One of the primary functions displayed that evening enabled parents to connect with the online PupilPath system which provides additional details about their child's progress.

Zone 126 staff dressed in eye-catching yellow shirts to encourage signups at their wireless hotspot table. Student interns assisted in displaying the phones on every floor and directing parents to the signup table where staff explained the details of the Sprint One Million project to students addressed families' questions.

Organizing Director Andre Stith, spoke with Shawn Perdue, the father of a Long Island City High School freshman about the device. "It has helped him a lot with researching for homework. He takes it with him everywhere he goes and he shares it with his nephew all the time" says Mr. Perdue. Mr. Perdue also said he as well as his wife has used it as well. He also commended the hotspots' added benefit of saving on their family's monthly phone bill. The Sprint One Million Project is one giant step towards closing the digital divide.

The Zone 126 Team has been working diligently to continuously collect parental consent forms and activate hotspots. Basic information about the program is located below and more can be found on the NYC Community Schools [website](#):

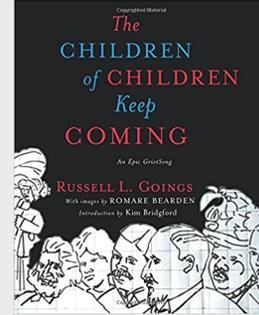
- Every high school student will receive a free wireless hotspot to use until they graduate;
- Hotspots will provide 3GB of high speed data access monthly (good for homework and research, but not for streaming movies or video). If they use up their 3GB, they can still access unlimited data at 2G speeds;
- Students will not be able to text or call from devices, only browse or connect a computer or tablet to the internet;
- Devices are set up to provide safe internet access for students, and Sprint has agreed to not use or sell personal student information for marketing or other purposes;
- Schools will hold an additional 10% in inventory to manage lost, damaged or stolen devices;
- Sprint will provide technical assistance on the devices through its normal customer service.

What We Are Reading

- *The Children of Children Keep Coming: An Epic Griotsong*, Russel L. Goings (right)

Partner Newsletters

- [Little Flower Yoga's](#) latest Mindful Mondays Resources and News [here](#)
- [enACT's](#) latest News [here](#)



Save the Date: Upcoming Events

Zone 126's 2017 Cocoa Mingle
Wednesday December 20
14-14 29th Ave, Long Island City, NY 11102
TIME TBD
Hot Cocoa will be served

**Click Here to Purchase A
Book for a Child from Zone
126's Amazon Wishlist**

Follow us at @Zone126Queens on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)!

We would like to thank all of our funders for all their help: Thomas & Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation, New York City Department of Education, Altman Foundation, Pinkerton Foundation and Staples Foundation.

*Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of the individual

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