

Dear Harbor Families,

I would like to introduce myself to our new families and welcome all of our returning families back to school. I am Debbie Decker and I serve as director of athletics, dean of faculty and students, and upper school advisor here at Harbor. I'm writing this letter in my capacity as dean of students, and I'd like to take this time to share some information with you about the role I play in your student's life here at Harbor.

As dean of students, I work cooperatively with the head of school, division heads, advisors, and teachers to support all Harbor students academically, socially, and emotionally so they can be their best selves. That may involve responding to challenges that inevitably arise within such a diverse student body, but it also involves proactively working with and communicating with students to ensure that they have the support and tools they need to solve problems and overcome challenges on their own.

Harbor's signature Advisory Program falls under my umbrella as well. This program was developed to provide an extra level of personalized support to our students and parents and to create a partnership between our faculty and our students and their families as they continue on their educational journey at Harbor. Please visit www.hcdsny.org/academics/upper-school for additional program details.

Another program I oversee is the annual overnight Frost Valley and Greenkill trips for our fifth through eighth graders. Each year, we take our fifth and sixth graders to Frost Valley, a YMCA camp in the Catskill Mountains in Claryville, New York. This program is a foundational program designed to create deeper connections among classmates and their teachers as well as critical thinking and problem-solving through group activities. Our seventh and eighth graders attend camp at the Greenkill Outdoor Education Center in Huguenot, New York, which is also a YMCA camp. The experience at Greenkill builds upon the skills and lessons children learn at Frost Valley and provides opportunities for the students to further strengthen their problem-solving and team-building skills and form even deeper bonds with one another. This year's trips are approaching quickly and will take place October 24-26. Please refer to the Harbor Backpack on our website (www.hcdsny.org/parents/harbor-backpack) for trip details. Permission slips and medical forms will be sent to you next week. Please print them, fill them out, and have your child bring them to the first day of school.

This year we are embracing our old but new Healthy Hawks initiative. Studies show a direct correlation between proper nutrition and academics. It's just like a car -- if you fuel your car with premium gas, your car will run better -- same as the human body. Please see the Harbor Backpack for snack ideas. Thank you for your support of our nutrition journey.

We also will be launching our Embrace our emotions initiative this year. Stay tuned for more details, as we will unwrap this at a later date.

If you have questions about any of this information, or anything else concerning your child's experience at Harbor, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at any time. My office is on the third floor and I can be

reached by email (ddecker@hcdsny.org) or phone (631-584-5555). Looking forward to another incredible school year!

Kind regards,
Debbie W. Decker
Dean of Faculty and Students
Director of Athletics
Head of Advisory