

August 2018

Dear Lower School Families,

It is with great enthusiasm that I welcome you to the new school year! I am excited that first grade is now a part of Harbor's lower school division. I look forward to partnering with all of you.

No matter what our age, summer seems to fly by. The days might feel long at times, but the months are short! I hope your summer was a mix of relaxation, adventure, time with family, and time for yourselves. Summer is full of so many wonderful moments. Children continue to grow up fast. (Sometimes it is hard to recognize them come the fall!) This summer, my goal was to slow down (my goal every summer). While I still found myself running around, I was able to take time with my children and enjoy their moments of new discovery. This year, my three year old daughter attended camp for the first time at our neighborhood school. She was very proud to show me her popsicle stick depiction of the Eiffel Tower, as well as to inform me that "Bonjay" was the way to say "hello" in French. My 21 month old son figured out how to press the release button and lift the metal swing gate I use to confine him to the playroom. No doubt he now has free reign over the house, and all sharp edges and hard surfaces are covered with cushions and duct tape.

This year at Harbor, we look forward to announcing our goals and how we are continuing to strengthen and build upon past goals we have set. Our Teachers College (TC) Reading and Writing approach continues to grow stronger. Teachers invested their time after the school year ended to participate in a summer institute with a local TC developer, Lauren Kolbeck, who designed a program based on Harbor's needs. Ms. Kolbeck began working with us last fall, and we will continue to work with her this upcoming year and next summer. Teachers also gave their time mid-summer to join our initiative for a character development program with Josh Hendrickson, founder and executive director of Project Presence. This work will be ongoing and integrated throughout our curriculum and community interactions so as to strengthen Harbor's social and emotional culture. We are also promoting healthy eating (beginning with healthy snacks) and will enlist your help and support! Lastly, we look to grow greener and give the children opportunities to come up with suggestions for how to do this in addition to being responsible for school-wide recycling and decrease of waste.

As head of the lower school and the fifth grade English and history teacher, I am able to learn about and learn from your children in a variety of ways. We will engage in rigorous work, find joy in our everyday experiences, find satisfaction when persevering through challenges, and develop grit and resilience.

I'd like to take the opportunity to remind you of a few nuts and bolts. Please remind your child to bring his/her summer reading project on the first day of classes, as well as any supplies your

child's teacher has asked him/her to bring. Information regarding these materials can be found in the Harbor Backpack: www.hcdsny.org/parents/harbor-backpack

Fifth and sixth grade families need to return their forms for Frost Valley (also in the Harbor Backpack) as soon as possible, preferably the first day of school. You can give the forms to Lynette Mutschler, who will pass them on to me.

In addition, note that our first day of school is Wednesday, September 5th. Back to School Night is Thursday, September 6th (details to follow). Additional events to know about are posted on the Harbor calendar. Before the start of the school year, please look over this calendar to be aware of additional events.

I encourage you to reach out to me throughout the school year. My email address is: dwoo@hcdsny.org. I look forward to answering any questions you have about our curriculum, your child's experience at school, and anything else on your mind. While your child's teachers are the first point of contact, I am always available. Transparency is the key to partnership. All of us in the lower school invite and welcome this.

Thank you for entrusting us with your children. We look forward to celebrating their learning with you.

Best wishes,
Dot Woo
Head of Lower School
Fifth Grade English and History
Curriculum Committee Tri-Chair