

DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) Day is a student workshop program designed to build awareness of issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

West Windsor – Plainsboro High School North

# DEI DAY 2024



## WHY DEI DAY?

- Build knowledge ✓
- Celebrate diversity ✓
- Take action ✓
- Enhance school culture ✓

Attend two sessions of your choice!

**Building Bridges** **Fostering Change**

Student Conference Program  
January 11, 2024 • 12:40 - 2:50 pm



## REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

- The registration link will be emailed to you on Wednesday 1/3/24 at 7:40 am.
- Register for **two** sessions by 2:50 pm Friday 1/5/24.
- Once a session is full, it will no longer appear as an option in the Google Form.
- If you do not select your sessions by Friday, sessions will be assigned to you.
- Once you sign up for sessions, you may not switch or sign up for different ones. Choose carefully!
- You will receive emails with your sessions and session locations the week of 1/8/24.

*Registration is first come, first served and space for some sessions is limited. Sign up early!*

## A Message from the DEI Planning Committee

For our 2nd annual DEI Day, we wanted to provide opportunities to build knowledge and skills about diversity, equity, inclusivity, and belonging by offering a wide variety of sessions to choose from that are aligned with the social justice standards from Learning for Justice. By participating in these sessions, we hope to inspire our school community to think or act with greater awareness and co-create a school environment that is more equitable and just.

This year's theme of "Building Bridges, Fostering Change" focuses on HSN students and teachers gaining inspiration, key insights, and actionable takeaways to drive positive change.

DEI Day 2024 was made possible by the support of the WW-P administration, a generous Envision Equity grant from the NEA Foundation, and our knowledgeable presenters. Thank you all for your help and support in making DEI Day 2024 a success!

HSN Equity Team  
DEI Day Student Planning Committee



# Focus

The wide range of DEI Day 2024 topics and ideas are organized by four thematic areas of focus.



## Accessibility & Inclusion

Learning about and exploring initiatives that focus on special education, learning differences and neurodiversity, and disabilities



## Equity & Justice

Championing equity, justice, belonging, diversity, and inclusion, including social and economic disparities, culturally responsive teaching, anti-racism practice, LGBTQIA+ issues, and more to ensure equitable practices and outcomes for all



## Advocacy & Civic Engagement

Empowering individuals to organize efforts for policy change by connecting communities across local, regional, national, and international governance through advocacy and activism



## Wellness & Belonging

Furthering social, emotional, mental and physical well-being and its intersections between learning, justice, equity, diversity and inclusion

# Formats

## Conversation

An in-depth and rich dialogue in a fireside chat format that discusses and dissects work and insights on a particular topic, followed by audience Q&A

## Panel

A dynamic and diverse discussion offering multiple viewpoints on a particular topic, followed by audience Q&A

## Highlight

An interactive, solutions-oriented presentation focusing on DEI related topics that spotlight a specific issue, concern, or area of interest

## Workshop

An in-depth, instructional program with engaging and interactive learning activities and actionable takeaways

West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District will cultivate a diverse and inclusive community where members of every race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ability, religion, socio-economic class, ethnicity, and national origin are welcomed, valued, respected and celebrated.

# Session 1

## Finding Vision In The Darkness: A Personal Story of Triumph and Transformation

Join me in this interactive experience where I'll share my journey of growing up blind, overcoming challenges, and reaching where I am today. Engage in an interactive "Ask Me Anything" session where the audience can pose questions to foster open dialogue. This workshop creates a safe space for curiosity, encouraging participants to inquire about blindness and, ultimately, inspiring positive change in the lives of those with visual impairments. Let's come together to learn, connect, and contribute to a more inclusive world.



**Anthony Ferraro**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



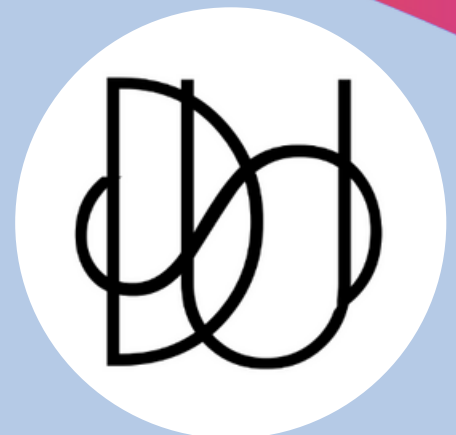
Anthony Ferraro is a professional athlete, motivational speaker, content creator, musician, and podcaster with a passion for connecting people with a never-give-up mentality. The subject of the award-winning documentary *A Shot In the Dark* (2017), Anthony has been sharing his life experiences for over a decade in person and through his social media channels with over 2.1 M followers. Anthony hopes to make the world a more accessible place for blind people through his stories and videos. Until then, he spreads the message of one love and a smile.

  [@asfvision](https://www.instagram.com/asfvision)

# Session 2

## Collaborate To Accommodate: Increasing The Accessibility Of Daily Life, One Step At A Time

Students will collaboratively problem-solve to make everyday situations more accessible/inclusive for disabled people. In small groups, they will be given a scenario and a disabled person to accommodate the scenario for. After generating ideas in small groups, they will share with other groups to learn about how other scenarios and disabilities can be accommodated. They will learn why accessibility is essential to an inclusive society and practice its implementation.



**HSN DSU**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



The HSN DSU (Disabled Student Union) creates a safe space wherein dis/abled students discuss disability identity, disability advocacy, and ableism in-school and beyond. Sessions contain open-ended discussions where members can choose topics, enjoy fun team-building activities, and plan for school/community-wide advocacy efforts. All students—and teachers—are welcome!



## "Game Knight": Making Connections through Inclusive Games & Activities



HSN TrACC

Join the TrACC students and staff for a session of exploring board games and group leisure activities. Connect with peers of diverse ages and abilities, fostering meaningful interactions in a neurodivergent-friendly environment. Share the joy of play while forging connections that transcend differences. Join us for a unique and inclusive experience, creating a space where everyone's strengths shine.

TrACC (Transition to Adulthood Community & Careers) is a program at High School North is a program supporting students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Tailored to individual needs, TrACC empowers students on their journey toward independence and meaningful engagement in their community and future careers.

Focus:



Format:



## Re-Thinking Transit & Housing in the Suburbs

Explore the future of NJ suburbs as we face 21st-century challenges like climate change, social isolation, and ever-increasing wealth gaps. Join this session to wrestle with big questions and consider real solutions for towns like West Windsor and Plainsboro. We'll brainstorm how to make suburbs more walkable, how to promote a diversity of housing (beyond just detached single-family homes), and how to enhance existing public transit - including the iconic Dinky train - in order to create more dynamic and accessible routes.



Brian Levinson

Brian Levinson teaches World History at High School South. Before becoming an educator, he did policy and advocacy work in New York. He also spent a year after college working as a reporter in central Mexico. He is passionate about housing and transportation policy—especially at the local level, here in New Jersey.

Focus:



Format:



# Session 5

## Discovering Self-Inspiration for Service

Join us as we explore the power of personal motivation in making a positive impact in the world. Uncover your unique passions and learn how to channel them into meaningful service projects that not only benefit others but also ignite your own sense of purpose. Let's embark on a journey of self-discovery and service, creating a ripple effect of change in our local and global communities. Are you ready to make a difference while finding inspiration within yourself? Let's get started!



Kelly Lee



Cheryl Ciaranca

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Kelly Lee, a 6th-grade science teacher, serves as the advisor for Hands Across the Water at CMS. Cheryl Ciaranca, a retired CMS professional, has been the visionary force behind Hands Across the Water since its inception in 2009. These accomplished women also hold pivotal roles as executive board members within the parent organization, Woman Cradle of Abundance. This local organization is committed to enhancing education, eradicating poverty and violence, and fostering the empowerment of women and children in the Democratic Republic of Congo of Africa.

# Session 6

## Civil Conversations: A Street Epistemology Workshop

Explore Street Epistemology in this interactive session that challenges your convictions. Engage in Socratic dialogue to deepen understanding, bridge gaps with dissenting perspectives, and cultivate intellectual openness. Bring your opinions to the table for questioning and nourishment, fostering an environment where ideas can fall from the tree of knowledge to seed new perspectives. Investigate staunchly held beliefs, embracing the opportunity to cultivate an open mind and promote thoughtful dialogue.



Eric Loveland

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Eric Loveland has been a French teacher at HSN for 23 years. His background in literature, language, and pedagogy informs his understanding of a wide range of ideas, in particular, how we think and how firm beliefs often arise from singularly limited perspectives on many topics. Knowing how to set the proper stage for dialogue reveals just how close supposedly differing opinions or ideas really are.





**Brendan McCann**

## How You Can Promote Change Through Service

Join us to learn about various service opportunities and how different organizations try to meet both the short and long-term needs of those they serve. Students will be challenged to reflect upon some of their preconceived notions regarding service and “those in need.” The goal of this session is for participants to become more globally aware and learn ways that they can promote change.

Brendan McCann teaches Computer Science at HSN. After graduating college, he completed a “service year,” working directly with a nonprofit in Camden, NJ called Hopeworks. His experiences and encounters with those he met have been a formative part of his life.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



**Jessica Cincotta**



**Dr. Barbara Gould**

## What Was I Supposed to Do?: From Awareness to Action

During this session, participants will discuss why we do or don't intervene when some bias incidents take place. This conversation will be grounded in information from the NJ Division of Civil Rights that centers on bystander behaviors and intervention methods. You will walk away from this session with a better understanding of yourself and your comfort levels in intervening as well as prepared, ready responses for future situations.

Barbara Gould has served as an administrator in the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District since 2011 where she now serves as Chief Academic Officer. Jessica Cincotta started her teaching career in the Midwest before teaching in South America for five years. She has worked as an administrator at all levels and is currently the principal of HSS. Together, they serve as the co-chairs of the Equity Strategic Goal for WWPRSD.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



# Session 9

## Transforming Education to Reflect Our Pluralistic Society

Join us to learn potential action steps and strategies for organizing and advocating for transforming education to reflect our pluralistic society and for an interactive history lesson about the South Asian Influence on the Civil Rights Movement. Sima Kumar and Dr. Kani Ilangovan are board members of Make Us Visible NJ and The E Pluribus Unum Project. MUVNJ led allies statewide for the successful legislation of AAPI curricula.



Sima Kumar



Dr. Kani Ilangovan

Focus:



Format:



Sima Kumar and Dr. Kani Ilangovan are board members of Make Us Visible NJ and The E Pluribus Unum Project. Ms. Kumar is an educator who published an NJEA Review article "Asian American in America's Literary Heritage." Dr. Ilangovan is a psychiatrist. MUVNJ led allies statewide for the successful legislation of AAPI curricula.

# Session 10

## Get Proximate: Understanding Diverse Experiences Through Memoir and Story

According to social activist and lawyer Bryan Stevenson, "You need to get proximate to the people you want to serve to get clarity." Join me to "get clarity" as you travel between stations to read, watch, and listen to excerpts of your choice that reflect perspectives from people who are Asian American, Black, Indigenous, Latine, Queer, and those who live with disabilities and mental health issues. We will then engage in discussion about how learning about others fosters empathy, and action steps we can take towards greater equity and justice.



Beth Pandolpho

Focus:



Format:



Beth Pandolpho is a Teacher Resource Specialist for Instruction and Intervention for grades 6-12 in the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District. She has taught English at the high school and college level for over 20 years, and is passionate about working towards increasing equity and access and creating an environment in which everyone feels like they belong.



## From Pages to Perspectives: Exploring Equity with Your Media Specialists



**Kate Carroll and Mary Desmond**

Kate Carroll is a School Library Media Specialist for HSN. She has been a high school librarian for nine years and has been working in libraries since she was in high school herself. Mary Desmond is a School Library Media Specialist for High School South. She has been a Language Arts teacher and media specialist for over twenty years. Mrs. Carroll and Mrs. Desmond believe that libraries are a foundation of democracy and the perfect place to explore ideas of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Are you naturally curious about topics dealing with diversity, equity, or inclusion? Whether it's dissecting film representation, leveraging social media for equity, or delving into color-blind casting and unconscious bias, Mrs. Carroll and Mrs. Desmond are ready to guide you. After signing up, Mrs. Carroll will connect with you to tailor materials for an insightful exploration of your chosen topic. Join us for a dynamic session facilitated by your friendly media specialists!

**Focus:**



**Format:**



## Equity in Education: Is School Fair for Everyone?



**Diane Chiocca and Ann Marie Waidelich**

Ann Marie Waidelich is a German teacher at Grover MS and has also taught at Community MS and HSN for over 20 years. Diane Chiocca is a 23-year veteran French teacher at Grover MS who taught at HSN. They have been researching inequities in schools around the world and presented at state and national level conferences and have won "Best Presenters" at NECTFL.

In this interactive workshop, students will engage in inquiry-based activities in order to understand some of the root causes of inequities in schools. Join us if you're interested in reflecting on your own identity and biases, examining who has power and privilege, and thinking about the ways we can co-create a more equitable and inclusive experience in WWP.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



# Session 13

## Racial Justice, Identity, and the Law

The law has been used more often to maintain injustice than to seek justice. In this session, we will discuss select US Supreme Court cases where race and identity are central. Students may read from case law, participate in debates on issues, or reenact pieces of the litigation. Students will also learn about ways to take action to address injustice in the world.



**Amol Sinha**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Amol Sinha is a nationally recognized leader and the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey, the premier civil rights and racial justice organization in the state. He is a lawyer who has dedicated his career to holding institutions accountable and fighting for the rights of marginalized communities. He is working to ensure that New Jersey is as equitable and fair of a state as possible.

# Session 14

## Respect or Theft? Exploring the Difference Between Appropriation and Appreciation

The Kardashians and cornrows. Eminem and rap music. Gwen Stefani and bindis. These are just some of the examples we will explore in this session as we discuss the differences between appreciating a culture and appropriating it. In addition to examining cases from music, fashion, and language, we will consider how appropriation can be harmful and we will discuss what it looks like to truly pay homage.



**Emily Creveling**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Emily Creveling is the WWP ELA Supervisor for grades 6-12. Prior to this role, she served as an assistant principal at High School South. Emily has dedicated over 24 years to her career as an educator, spending much of that time in the NYC public school system. She feels that education is vital to disrupting systems of oppression and is dedicated to ensuring educational equity for all students here in WWP.





**Aster Sander-Phipps**

## Navigating Diversity: Understanding Unconscious Bias in Everyday Life

Embark on a journey with us in this session, discovering how subtle biases shape our daily interactions, from school to social settings. We'll explore practical ways to recognize and overcome unconscious bias, fostering a culture where everyone's story is valued. Join us for an eye-opening experience, navigating diversity together to create a more inclusive and harmonious world.

Aster Sander-Phipps, certified Life Coach, is a native African who is an experienced world traveler and language enthusiast. She has had the privilege of living on four continents since childhood and finds joy in exploring diverse cultures and languages. As someone deeply passionate about creating an inclusive space, she believes that labels should never limit our potential.

**Focus:**



**Format:**

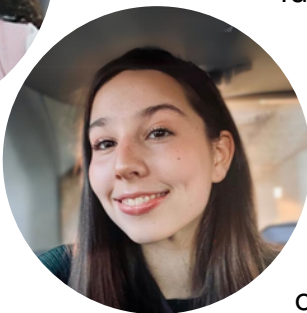


## Representation Matters: Exploring Culture, Representation, and Diversity In and Out of School

In this student-led session, Hana and Yasmeen will facilitate open, judgment-free discussion that encourages students to reflect on their own experiences with representation and diversity. The discussion will be guided by quotes and questions aimed to evoke thoughtful responses. Students will also be asked to bring an item that is representative of their culture (could also be a photo). The 'show-and-tell' will spark conversations about the representation of these items in media or within the school context.



**Yasmeen London**



**Hana Mahmutbegovic**

Yasmeen London and Hana Mahmutbegovic are 11th-grade HSN students and members of the DEI Day Student Planning Committee. They believe it is important to strengthen awareness about individual differences, enhance knowledge of diverse cultures, and remain informed about current global events.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



# Session 17

## Book as Bridges: Fostering Inclusivity in Young Readers

Teachers can facilitate inclusive, accurate, and developmentally appropriate learning in the classroom through inclusive books. Join part of Maurice Hawk’s JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) team to discuss how the team is supporting teachers with resources to teach what historically has been misrepresented or marginalized. After the discussion, join us to create read-alouds for the elementary classroom!



Shaina Daniels



Dr. Victoria Locane

### Focus:



### Format:



Shaina Daniels (she/her), a special education teacher at Maurice Hawk, serves as an Equity Teacher Lead and was a key member of the Equity Stakeholder Strategic Planning Team. Actively involved in the Equity Resource Group, Shaina is dedicated to fostering a supportive classroom where students feel welcomed, valued, and celebrated. Dr. Victoria Locane (she/her), a special education preschool teacher at Maurice Hawk with experience at Village and Town Center, holds a doctorate in Early Childhood Education. Her research focuses on perceived barriers to inclusive classroom libraries.

# Session 18

## Religious Pluralism, Public Schools, and Learning on Purpose

TCNJ Sociologist Tim Clydesdale has shown that “most American teens keep core identities in an ‘identity lockbox.’” He also shows that students can “gain a greater sense of purpose or direction for [their] life” by engaging these identities, including religious identity. In this session, students will explore WW-P’s pluralistic religious makeup, identify “religion” in our curricula, consider appropriate engagement given our public school setting, and discuss how we can—whether one is religious or not—find deeper purpose and meaning by engaging our diverse traditions, histories, and cultures.



Dr. Matthew Warren

### Focus:



### Format:



Dr. Matthew Warren teaches AP US and European History at HS North and South. He recently completed a PhD dissertation focused on Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s religious and ethical writings. He enjoys helping students draw upon their personal histories, cultures, and identities to see their own education as transformational rather than transactional.



## Confronting Anti-Trans Realities to Imagine and Enact Just Futures



Katie Cubano



Justin Dolcimascolo-Garrett

What types of discrimination are trans people currently experiencing in our society? Explore the current discrimination faced by trans individuals and unravel the reasons behind widespread misinformation about them. Delve into how anti-trans groups fabricate controversies to influence public opinion. Discover how to be a supportive ally and advocate for justice. Join us to gain insight into the challenges trans people encounter and empower yourself to make a positive impact in your communities.

Justin Dolcimascolo-Garrett, a Teacher Resource Specialist for Gifted & Talented in grades 6-8 at WWP, has 20+ years of teaching experience. He presents at the national level on LGBTQIA+ and identity issues to foster inclusive classrooms. Katie Cubano, a curriculum and instruction enthusiast, served over a decade as an English teacher before becoming an instructional coach in 2019. Passionate about equitable education and supporting teachers, Katie collaborates to enhance educational outcomes for underserved student populations, contributing to a more civil, sustainable, and just future.

Focus:



Format:



## Queer Joy: Connecting LGBTQ+ Individuals Through Shared Experiences



HSN GSA

For marginalized groups who are faced with dehumanizing and overwhelming challenges, carving out spaces for individuals within those groups to connect, heal, and celebrate is an important part of creating a healthy community. In this session, LGBTQ+ students and allies will gather to share their experiences as a member or ally of the queer community and celebrate "queer joy," or the unique positives that come with queerness.

The Gender-Sexuality Alliance is a club at HSN dedicated to spreading awareness about LGBTQ+ issues and creating a safe space for LGBTQ+ students and allies. In the past, they have hosted fundraisers, spirit days, and informational activities to further their goals of fighting for the rights of and celebrating the LGBTQ+ community.

Focus:



Format:



# Session 21

## Menstrual Equity: Deconstructing Period Stigma

Join Project Full Stop to gain insights into menstruation and combat period stigma. Explore topics such as menstrual equity, the historical context of menstruation, and menstrual education. Engage in discussions and activities focused on enhancing our understanding and addressing current challenges for a more informed and equitable future.



Project Full Stop

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Project Full Stop (PFS) is a student-led organization that aims to promote menstrual equity, provide free period products, and end period stigma. PFS has led several initiatives towards these objectives, such as hosting fundraisers to help those struggling with period poverty and stocking the High School North bathrooms with free menstrual products.

# Session 22

## I Am Not My Hair: A History of Black Hair

In this engaging session, students will delve into the rich history of Black hair, exploring its evolution from cornrows to relaxers and beyond. The discussion will encompass topics such as positive Black hair representation, the nuances of cultural appropriation, and the significance of the Crown Act. Moreover, students will have hands-on opportunities to learn the art of braiding, fostering a communal environment where they can share their newfound knowledge with their peers.



HSN BSU

**Focus:**



**Format:**



The Black Student Union is a student club at HSN formed to give a diverse group of students a voice to advocate for students of color and bring awareness to the controversial issues that center around racial disparities. This club aims to inspire, educate, and encourage while promoting cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence within our community.

## Dive into Language Diversity: Explore Chinese Dual Language Immersion & the Art of Calligraphy



Yi Zeng



Diana Li

Explore the impact of WW-P's Chinese Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion. Immerse yourself in the beauty of Chinese culture through language, and delve into the art of calligraphy. This program encourages expanding horizons, shaping a more inclusive world through the exploration of language and cultural understanding. Join us in this enriching journey of linguistic and cultural discovery!

Yi Zeng, a Chinese culture and literacy teacher in the DLI program at Maurice Hawk and Village Elementary Schools for 3 years, is dedicated to enhancing equity and diversity through cultural education. Diana Li, a 4th-grade Chinese Instructional Assistant in the WW-P School District's DLI program for 3 years, is passionate about fostering a Mandarin and Chinese culture learning environment where all students feel a sense of belonging and are inspired to engage passionately with the target language.

Focus:



Format:



Chinese Culture Club

## Hands-On Heritage: Chinese Cultural Workshop

Ever been fascinated by Chinese culture? Beginning with a brief presentation introducing diverse Chinese cultural activities, participants will engage in hands-on experiences rooted in Chinese culture. Activities include trying your hand at the Chinese yo-yo, participating in a chopstick competition, experimenting with traditional paper cutting, and learning to play shuttlecock. Immerse yourself in a dynamic exploration, discovering the richness of Chinese traditions firsthand in a workshop setting.

The Chinese Culture Club, affiliated with HSN & HSS, spearheads the yearly collaborative Chinese Lunar New Year celebration, China Night. Through captivating performances and interactive booths, we showcase traditional Chinese culture. We are excited to bring these culturally enriching activities to DEI Day. By fostering understanding and appreciation, we aim to create an inclusive environment that celebrates the diversity of our school community.

Focus:



Format:





# Session 25

## Japanese Families of WWP: A Cultural Share

Participate in an exploration of Japanese culture with Dutch Neck Elementary students and their families. Discover key facets like language, traditions, and holidays through engaging presentations. The Dutch Neck students will also lead hands-on activities, providing a firsthand experience for all participants. Don't miss this chance to learn and immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of Japanese culture.



Dutch Neck Students and Families



Rebecca Singleton-Baldrey

Focus:



Format:



Rebecca Singleton-Baldrey is a First Grade Teacher at Dutch Neck Elementary School in the West-Windsor Plainsboro School District. She has taught at DN for nearly ten years and has taught many ELL students. She is excited to collaborate with her Japanese families and their children to share information on Japanese culture.

# Session 26

## Learning Hindu Culture through Art

Join us on a cultural journey with HCSA to explore the rich values and history of Hinduism in our enlightening session. Discover various art forms tied to Hindu festivities, like painting diyas and applying henna. Delve into a brief lesson highlighting the cultural significance of these activities. This engaging session offers participants the chance to participate in three different activities, fostering a hands-on connection with Hindu traditions and a deeper appreciation for this vibrant and diverse culture.



HSN Hindu Cultural Student Association

Focus:



Format:



The Hindu Cultural Student Association is a student-led club at WWP High School North that explores Hinduism as both a religion and a culture. This student-led community welcomes people from all backgrounds to learn about different aspects of the religion, share their experiences, and celebrate Hindu culture.



HSN SAASA

## NORTH SAASA: Embrace Diversity through Dance

Embark on a cultural exploration with High School North's largest student organization. Uncover the vibrant heritage of South Asian art forms through a brief presentation, engaging dance performances, and dance workshops. Be prepared to not only learn about South Asian culture, but also learn in dance workshops led by your very own SAASA officers. We hope you enjoy this immersive experience and learn more about the diversity of South Asian traditions.

High School North's South Asian American Student Association, otherwise known as North SAASA, is a cultural organization that focuses on celebrating South Asian heritage through various dance styles and art forms! With a focus on both entertaining and educating others on our cultural diversity and richness, SAASA invites people to experience captivating traditions through artistic expression.

Focus:



Format:



## Indian Folk Arts : Understanding the Importance of Community Dancing

Although Bollywood has been at the forefront of the representation of Indian art forms, there are hundreds of more to explore. Each state of India has unique folk dances that are traditionally performed together as a community. Using the formation of a circle, we will explore steps that come from different regions of India usually performed by tribal groups.



Shivani Badgi

Shivani Badgi is an Indian American dancer, teacher, and choreographer specializing in Kathak, Lavani, and Bollywood. She has performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Consulate General of India, the United Nations, and Florida's Disney World. She is the founder of The Gurukul Performing Arts, a performing arts school in NJ/NYC.

Focus:



Format:



# Session 29

## Tracing Traditions: Discover the Ancient Art of Arabic Calligraphy

Arabic calligraphy, the art of beautiful handwriting, has long been a revered art form in the Islamic world. In this session, students will trace the history of Arabic calligraphy from its emergence in the Arabian Peninsula over 14 centuries ago through its development in empires and dynasties to become the modern Arabic we use today. Students will be provided with paper and brush pens and will learn to create their own Arabic calligraphy.



**HSN Muslim Student Association**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



The WWP North Muslim Student Association is a group of students passionate about deepening students' knowledge of Islamic culture, heritage, and traditions. Since its founding in 2022, the organization has set out to create a comfortable space for Muslim and non-Muslim students to learn about Islam.

# Session 30

## Dual Language Immersion: Conducting a Colorful Science Experiment in Spanish

Explore language comprehension strategies in a world language setting, incorporating visuals, cognates, gestures, and context clues. Students follow target language instructions to engage in a hands-on science lesson, creating a final product. Sharing successes and challenges fosters an immersive, enjoyable experience, promoting empathy for ELL students. No prior Spanish language knowledge is necessary for this enriching activity.



**Aarti Williams and Maria Spallone**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Aarti Williams is a 2nd-grade Spanish Dual Language teacher at Duck Elementary School with over 7 years of teaching experience. Maria Spallone is a third-grade Spanish Dual Language Immersion teacher with over 10 years of teaching experience. They both prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusivity in their instruction due to their diverse ethnic, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences.





**Brian Fortuna**

## Cultural Grooves: A Latin Dance Exploration

Embark on a vibrant journey into the world of Latin dance, an evocative partner-style genre rooted in Latin America. Explore the cultural essence of iconic dances like salsa, merengue, and bachata, reflecting the identities of diverse countries and cultural groups. Join our interactive dance lesson led by internationally renowned dance professional Brian Fortuna, who guides participants through fundamental techniques in both beginner and intermediate sessions. Students will cultivate an appreciation for the cultural significance and rhythmic expressions inherent in these dances.

Brian Fortuna has starred in hits on both the stage and television, including *Dancing with the Stars*, *Strictly Come Dancing*, and *Burn the Floor*. Brian has toured extensively as a principal dancer, performing at every major venue in both the US and the UK. He performed the dual roles of dancer and host during the *Dancing with the Stars* tours. He excels in Latin Dance Sport and Wheelchair Ballroom and is proud to be a teacher and performer for the US Wheelchair Dancing Association.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



## Tea and Cookies: Exploring and Celebrating Cultures through a Culinary Lens

Join Chef Stucker to learn and celebrate how different cultures express themselves through food. In this session, students will explore a variety of flavors and textures by sampling tea and cookies inspired by recipes from around the globe. The goal of this session is to expand awareness and appreciation of cultures that are different from our own.



**Telma Juarez-Stucker**

Telma Juarez-Stucker had a 20-year career in computers before switching paths to be a pastry chef and, for the last 6 years, a high school Culinary Arts teacher. She has had the privilege of living in different countries like Spain, Belgian, Germany, Brazil, Chile, and the USA (Dallas and NJ). This exposure to different cultures, people, and food has had a lasting impact.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



# Session 33

## Journey through Jewish Traditions: Celebrating Diversity with the JCYC

Embark on a captivating exploration of Jewish customs, traditions, and holidays. Discover the significance of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Chanukah, Passover, and timeless traditions like Bar Mitzvahs. Engage in interactive experiences at various stations guided by Jewish student leaders from your school, offering a deeper understanding of Jewish culture and fostering a sense of unity within the community.



**HSN Jewish Community Youth Club**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Jewish Community Youth Club is a student-led cultural club at High School North dedicated to combating and preventing anti-Semitism in our community. Our club aspires to teach our school about Jewish culture, customs, practices, and history through meetings and events.

# Session 34

## Laughing Together: Comedy as a Communication Tool

In this interactive workshop, we'll delve into comedy class exercises designed to enhance self-expression, fortify group bonds, and promote both self-acceptance and acceptance of diverse perspectives. Through laughter and shared experiences, we'll create a wellness-focused space that nurtures belonging and supports the principles of inclusion, fostering a sense of community and personal growth among peers.



**Chris Gethard**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Chris Gethard is a professional comedian and the founder of Laughing Together, a non-profit organization that teaches comedy as a communication tool. He's been on television, movies, and podcasts, but is most excited to spread comedy as a self-empowerment tool and group bond building activity.



Janet Haag



David Cohn

## Mind Matters: Speak, Listen, Thrive

Unlock the power of dialogue in our workshop – where we explore the transformative impact of conversations. Delve into the notion that every journey, especially the one toward mental health, begins with dialogue. Discover how openness fosters self-awareness and connections with others. Join us to enhance personal and collective wellbeing through active listening and learning.

Janet Haag has been Executive Director at NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Mercer. She brings to this role 20+ years in nonprofit management, education, editing/publishing, and human services. She has also been an adjunct professor and a field placement supervisor for graduate and undergraduate interns. David Cohn studies psychology at The College of New Jersey. He is currently interning at NAMI Mercer and will be pursuing his Masters in Social Work with plans on becoming a therapist for people struggling with mental health and addiction.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



## Mindful Connections: Practices for Peace and Inner Calm

In this session, we will practice mindfulness exercises to help us experience the peace and calm that comes with intentionally noticing the ways in which we are interconnected with and interdependent on each other and nature. Together we will practice focusing on our breath, guided meditation while eating a healthy snack, and gratitude journaling with the goal of incorporating these techniques into your daily lives.



Randi Greenhouse

Randi Greenhouse is a Language Arts teacher at HSN. She has completed training with Mindful Schools and has presented to teachers on how to incorporate meditation in the classroom. Mrs. Greenhouse believes that meditation has the potential to bring wisdom, peace, and calm to those who engage in regular practice and looks forward to sharing the benefits of mindfulness with the students at HSN.

**Focus:**



**Format:**





# Session 37

## Mindfully Crafted: Elevating Relationships through Meditation and Creativity

What exactly is the buzz around mindfulness? Simply put, mindfulness is the skill of being aware of your thoughts at any given moment without being overwhelmed by them. This session delves into two avenues for cultivating mindfulness: meditation and creativity. Students will explore and practice guided meditation, alongside crafting a tangible item like a meditative stone, mantra bracelet, mindful drawing for their personal mindful practices, fostering improved self-awareness and enriching connections with others.



Cathy Reilly

**Focus:**



**Format:**

Cathy Reilly worked in public education for 28 years, first as a high school English teacher and then as a Supervisor of English and ESL. After deciding to make a career change, she earned a Master's in Social Work and currently works as a counselor where she provides individual and group therapy for clients with mental health and substance use disorders. Cathy regularly incorporates mindful practices into her work with clients.

# Session 38

## Cultivating Growth: Mindful Pathways to Equity

Engage in "inner jots" self-reflection, dance, and self-regulation activities, celebrating mistakes as we explore Mindfulness and Equity in diverse contexts. This session delves into self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathetic understanding of our emotions. By fostering kindness to ourselves and others, we learn to pay it forward, bridging the principles of Mindfulness and Equity for personal and collective growth.



Susan Hsueh

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Susan Hsueh, a Standard Chinese Language teacher in WWP since 2001, currently teaches grades 6–8 at GMS and previously taught at HSN and HSS. Before her teaching career, she served in Gov. Whitman's Office of Protocol and International Trade, collaborating with the NJ Department of Racial Equity. Since 1994, Susan has actively supported equity through volunteerism, contributing to various organizations, including the United Way, the Governor Board of Trustees for Asian American Study Foundation, and WWP Pan Asian American Heritage Month in 2019.

## Yoga and Meditation for the Mind, Body and Soul



**Amanda Frost**

This session will offer participants an opportunity to try the ancient practices of yoga and meditation in a fun, beginner-friendly and non-intimidating environment. Participants should wear comfortable clothing and be expected to move in safe and gentle ways for the entirety of the session. Participants will learn simple meditation and yoga techniques to help calm the mind, de-stress, and enjoy some physical movement to release tension in the physical body.

Amanda Frost, a devoted practitioner of yoga and meditation since 2011, obtained her 200-hour CYT in 2017. As a World Civilizations educator at GMS and a passionate world traveler, Amanda intertwines her love for sharing global cultures with the transformative essence of yoga. Beyond fostering individual connections with mind, body, and soul, Amanda believes in yoga's power to unite people across ages, ethnicities, faiths, and nationalities, echoing its ancient and universal appeal enjoyed worldwide for millennia.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



## Beyond Success: Wellness, Advocacy, and Creating Joyful Futures



**Jennifer and Alex Whiting**

Embark on a transformative workshop with Jennifer and Alex Whiting to discover how true success surpasses material wealth, with an emphasis on holistic well-being and advocacy. Join us to explore your own path so you can determine how to foster your own happiness through service to shape a kinder, more compassionate world.

Jennifer Whiting, former TV host and business owner, passionately volunteers for local organizations. In 2021, she founded LoveGrub, addressing college campus food insecurity. Alex Whiting, an entrepreneur and philanthropist, builds and sells companies, donating generously to local and international charities. Actively engaged with a South African charity, he established early childhood education centers, providing education and sustainable food sources to impoverished communities. Together, they inspire others to find happiness through service.

**Focus:**



**Format:**



# Session 41

## Balancing Academics, Athletics, and Wellness: Strategies for Student-Athlete Success

Embarking on college while pursuing a competitive sport? If you're committed to both, join the PE department to master the intricacies of balancing academics, athletics, and wellness. Benefit from our personal journeys and group discussions, gaining insights from our collective experiences as student-athletes and college coaches. Explore effective time management, organization skills, valuable resources, and real-world coping strategies. Elevate your college experience as a student-athlete, equipping yourself for success in both realms.



**Dakota Apicella, Jordan Searles, Stephanie Pegues, and Taylor Mastropasqua**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



Dakota Apicella is a Health & PE teacher at HSN and played volleyball at William Paterson University for 5 years. Jordan Searles has taught Health & PE at HSN for 4 years and played soccer for The College of New Jersey for 4 years. She was also the Women's Soccer graduate assistant coach at Wilkes University for 2 years. Stephanie Pegues is a Health & PE teacher at HSN, swam for William Paterson University for 4 years, and coached swimming at Monmouth University. Taylor Mastropasqua is a Health & PE teacher at HSN and played soccer for William Paterson University for 5 years. They are passionate about breaking down the "jock" stereotype and providing student-athletes with the skills needed to be successful on and off the field.

# Session 42

## Stitched With Love: Creating Connections Through Crochet

In this hands-on session, learn the therapeutic art of crocheting by creating colorful hearts. No experience is necessary, and supportive mentors will guide you to learn at your own pace. Together, we will nurture our social and emotional well-being as we build community through the art of creation.



**WWP Textiles**

**Focus:**



**Format:**



WWP Textiles is a student-led community of crocheters that meet with the Art Club every Thursday at UDH. Having taught over 80+ peers, the mentors are experienced and passionate about providing hands-on guidance and resources free of cost, welcoming individuals of all experience levels eager to learn!



## DEI Day Student Planning Committee

Tarikka Ashwin  
Kayla Babbitt  
Shibani Dagalur  
Bria Davis-Owens  
Rani Halder  
Race Harish  
Hailey Hwang  
DJ Jain  
Sharon Joseph Pulikottil  
Dayley Katz  
Tejasre Keshvan  
Yasmeen London  
Hana Mahmutbegovic  
Mishka Mehta  
Derek Mulder  
Shruthi Muruganandam  
Pooja Narayan  
Eesha Srinivasan  
Shay Mahin  
Lev Thompson  
Milo Tsai

## High School North Equity Team

Jennifer Bard  
Kate Carroll  
Christine Fityere  
Fay Kim  
Jessica Liriano-Crumbock  
Tara McCarthy  
Diane McGovern  
Tracy McPhail Millard  
Beth Ann Nowak  
Christine Osborne  
Beth Pandolpho  
Courtney Shein  
Sonia Singh  
Caitlyn Sweeney  
Lamont Thomas  
Rosalyn Washington  
Jessica Wong

**BE BRAVE.  
SERVE THE WORK.  
TAKE GOOD CARE.  
CULTIVATE BELONGING.  
CREATE BEAUTY AND  
EXCELLENCE IN  
ALL THINGS.**

-Brené Brown

### West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District

Superintendent: Dr. David Aderhold  
Chief Academic Officer: Dr. Barbara Gould  
Deputy Superintendent: Dr. Lee McDonald  
Asst. Superintendent for Personnel: Charity Comella  
Chief Equity Officer: Susan Totaro  
Director of Counseling: Jessica Smedley  
DEI Coordinator: Pema Nodong  
District Equity Goal Co-Leads: Jessica Cincotta  
and Dr. Barbara Gould

### WW-P High School North

Lamont Thomas, Principal  
Dr. Fay Kim, Assistant Principal  
Sonia Singh, Assistant Principal  
Beth Pandolpho and  
Kate Carroll, HSN Equity  
Team Co-Leads

Questions?  [fay.kim@wwprsd.org](mailto:fay.kim@wwprsd.org)