



Hillside Happenings

November 14, 2025

[Hebrew translation](#)

[Korean translation](#)

[Spanish translation](#)

Take Note

STAFF UPDATES

Ms. Klink, our librarian/media specialist, has extended her leave of absence. Ms. Keller will continue in the role through December 22, 2025. Following winter recess, Ms. Kelly Kawaguchi will assume the position. Ms. Kawaguchi is a certified teacher who recently completed a successful leave replacement here at Hillside School.

Ms. Lang, school counselor for grades 2–4, is anticipated to return on November 26. We are grateful for Ms. Lewis's dedication and support during Ms. Lang's absence. To ensure a smooth transition for students and staff, Ms. Lewis will work alongside Ms. Lang through December 2.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Hillside School's fall parent/teacher conferences will be held during the week of December 1, 2025.

Monday, December 1, 2025 - 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 2, 2025 - 1:30 p.m.-3:15 p.m. (12:40 p.m. dismissal for students)

Thursday, December 4, 2025- 6:00 p.m.-8:15 p.m.

We also offer morning conferences from 8:05 a.m. to 8:35 a.m. during the week of December 1, 2025.

Your child's teacher will provide further information for scheduling your conferences. If you would like to conference with staff members other than your child's teacher, (Plus, Art, Music, Physical Education, Science, STEM, Library, Occupational Therapist, Speech/Language Pathologist, and Special Educators), please contact that staff member directly. Email contacts can be found on our [website](#).

As a reminder, Hillside staff have assigned parking spots reserved for their use. Visitors should park only in designated visitor spaces, numbered spaces 95-136 in the upper loop, or on the street. Please note that an open numbered parking spot does not indicate it is available for visitors.

This is especially important as we approach parent-teacher conferences. Ensuring staff spaces remain open helps prevent delays and contributes to a smooth experience for all attendees. We encourage you to plan ahead and utilize the designated visitor parking areas or street parking. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

OUTDOOR RECESS

With the cooler weather months approaching, please ensure your child comes to school with appropriate warm clothing for outdoor recess. Students will continue to go outside for recess whenever weather conditions permit.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Congratulations to the 2025-26 Officers:

President- Shane Spoto

Vice President- Bradley Chu

Treasurer- Sam Balog

Secretary- Caroline Min

PTO Author Visit

Students in grades two-four enjoyed an Author Visit with Peter Brown,



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In The Halls of Hillside

During the year, you will find information about what our students are learning in Music, Physical Education, Art, Spanish, Science, STEM and Library.

From Ms. Pidi, Music Teacher

Welcome to music class!

Kindergarten, first, and second grade music classes are enjoying singing and playing classroom instruments. With these activities the students are practicing the steady beat, singing on pitch and recognizing the basic elements of music. They are also enjoying the celebrations of the season. The first grade will share a Thanksgiving performance with families on Tuesday, November, 25th at 10:00 am. More information will follow as we approach this date.

Third graders are spending their first unit of study preparing to read notation in treble clef. They will be applying their note reading skills while recognizing melodic direction, singing from scores and playing melodies on their recorders.

Fourth graders are all participating in two part choral singing. In addition to their weekly music class, they have been meeting in larger ensembles to rehearse choral repertoire and prepare for our Winter Concert which is scheduled for Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at 10:00am. More information about this performance will come home as we get closer to the day.

From Ms. Jost, Science Teacher

In Science Lab, students from Kindergarten to 4th Grade are practicing observing and wondering about real-world phenomena - things they can see and experience around them. They are learning to ask questions about what they see and planning simple investigations to collect evidence. Using what they discover, students work together to explain what's happening and connect their ideas to scientific concepts. Here are the questions we are working on:

- Kindergarten - How do living things change their environment?
- 1st Grade - What special structures do animals have to help them survive and how can we mimic these to help humans solve problems?
- 2nd Grade - How do we know if something is a solid or a liquid and how can we classify it using its properties?
- 3rd Grade - How can we tell if Anderson Brook is healthy and how does it impact the animals that live in and around the brook?
- 4th Grade - How do objects use energy and how does energy transfer from one place to another?

From Ms. Capparelli and Mr. Potkulski, Physical Education Teachers

Physical Education

For students in grades K-2, our focus has been on developing a variety of movement skills, including kicking, soccer, rhythm and dance, directions, locomotor skills, pathways, levels, and body shapes. Currently, students are participating in healthy eating and nutrition activities that connect movement with making good food choices.

Students in grades 3-4 have been focusing on teamwork and cooperation, working through challenges together, and finding positive ways to solve problems. They've practiced soccer skills, created and participated in dance routines, fitness challenges, and set fitness goals, while also discussing the importance of regular exercise. Currently, students are focusing on nutrition and developing healthy habits to support a healthy and active lifestyle.

To celebrate all their hard work throughout the year, students will participate in our annual Field Day at the end of the year!

November at Home Activity Challenge

Let's Dance: Turn on everyone's favorite songs and dance together for 5-10 minutes. Take turns being the "DJ" and "dance leader." Maybe even create a small routine together. Great for rhythm, cardio, and fun!

From The Health Office

An important letter from the Health Office is [linked here](#).

The Curriculum CUBby

by Ms. Zanin, Assistant Principal (zanink@nvnet.org)

As we move through November, we have so much to be grateful for here at Hillside—especially our vibrant learning community and the incredible growth we are seeing across our classrooms! Our students continue to make meaningful progress in Mathematics and Language Arts as they engage in rich discussions, explore new strategies, and build confidence through hands-on learning.

Across the school, classrooms are buzzing with excitement and curiosity. From phenomena-based science lessons that have students exclaiming, *"This is so fun!"* to our 4th Grade Trick-or-Treat Street project filled with creativity and teamwork, our teachers are designing experiences that truly bring learning to life. In Language Arts, students are diving into centers that support visualization and inferencing—skills that strengthen comprehension and empower them as lifelong readers.

We are proud of the effort, enthusiasm, and growth we see every day. Thank you for partnering with us in supporting our learners—together, we are building a strong foundation for success!

Test Talk

Congratulations to our fourth-grade students and staff on successfully completing the NJSLA-Adaptive Field Test. We are so proud of our students' focus, cooperation, and positive attitude throughout the process. This experience provided valuable insight as we prepare for the statewide assessments in the spring.

As a reminder, this field test is designed solely to support the development of future assessments, so no individual student scores or school data will be generated or shared.

Later this month, you will receive a letter with your child's Literacy Screening results, which are part of New Jersey's statewide Literacy Screening Initiative. These results will be reviewed in detail during your parent-teacher conference the week of December 1st, where your child's teacher will walk you through the information and answer any questions you may have.

We encourage you to take a moment to review the results once they arrive, as well as the accompanying *Understanding Score Report* and [FAQ document](#), which provides helpful context about the screening process. If, after your conference, you still have questions, please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher.

For those interested in learning more about the research behind early literacy development, families may also view a brief informational video from Rutgers University titled [The Simple View of Reading](#).

From The Counselors

This month, our school counselors focused on Friendship, Kindness, and Gratitude!

We began November with Friendship Lessons and a World Kindness Day lesson to remind students how small acts of kindness can make a big difference. Throughout the rest of the month, classes will participate in a Gratitude Presentation, where students will create Gratitude Leaves to display the many things they are thankful for.

As we wrap up the month and prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday, students will take part in a Loving Kindness Meditation, a calming activity to encourage compassion toward themselves and others.

Parent Tip of the Month: We encourage families to discuss gratitude at home and consider creating lasting gratitude habits. Remember, being specific and heartfelt makes your words even more meaningful! Don't just tell Mom you're grateful for her; explain *why* you're grateful for her.

Upcoming Dates

11/26- Early dismissal, 12:40 p.m.

11/27-28- Thanksgiving, schools closed

12/2- Early dismissal, Parent/Teacher Conferences

12/5- Spirit Day! Wear red or Hillside gear.

Reminders

- If you are utilizing the active drop-off/pick-up lane, **you must remain in your vehicle.**



Thanksgiving Food Drive

Coat Drive

From The ESL Department

<https://meet.google.com/zui-oqgw-bcv>
Google Meets link



Ms. Dianne M. Smith
Principal