

Central Queens Academy Elementary School



Central Queens Academy Elementary School : Achievement. Equity. Empowerment.

Welcome!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

With Ms. Feirman

Tips from a Teacher-
Parent: How Using
YouTube Can Make
Your Child Love to Read

Reader's Spotlight

Why I Choose CQA
Elementary School

May is Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Heritage Month. During this month, we take special care to highlight and recognize the countless achievements and contributions made to our community by generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. **Did you know** that Central Queens Academy (CQA) is the first charter school founded by an Asian-led organization? That's right! In 2012, Apex for Youth along with CQA founder Suyin So set out to create a school and community wherein all scholars and their families would have access to high-quality education and the supports needed to help each child achieve their potential.

Since then, CQA has become the top-performing charter middle school in Queens and is now expanding. This August, we open our doors to our first Kindergarten and First Grade classes. We are delighted to grow our CQA community. Thank you for being part of it.



With Ms. Feirman

BY MICHELLE FEIRMAN

One of the core values of CQA is Care for Community. This means the community of scholars, families, and staff inside our building, but also the broader community that we live in. We are so lucky to be in a neighborhood as diverse as ours is in Queens. There are so many cultures and countries represented. One foundational goal of our school is to create a community where scholars learn about their identities and the identities of those around them. I want all of our scholars to value themselves and others, and see our diversity as a gift.

This AAPI Heritage month, it is more important than ever to live these values in our everyday lives. There has been a rise in anti-Asian sentiment and violence in our country and our city. In order to be allies to the AAPI members of our community, we need to continue to learn about those around us. We need to seek to understand how the identity of others affects the way they experience the world around them, even if it is different from our own experiences.



Most importantly, we need to show everyone in our community that despite our differences, you are valued and loved for exactly who you are.

Many people shy away from these conversations with kids because they are “too young to understand,” or we want to shelter them from “tough conversations.” I believe that it is imperative to have these conversations, beginning at an early age. If you want support in having these conversations, there are many [resources available](#). If you have any questions or feedback, I am always open to having conversations. I look forward to continuing to build this community as one that cherishes diversity and is a brave space for open and honest conversation and learning.

"Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need for one another. "

- Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Laureate

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Tips from a Teacher-Parent: How Using YouTube May Help Your Child Love to Read

BY JESSICA MAGNUSSON

Are you struggling to get your child to pick up a book and be excited to read it? It seems like kids just want to watch cartoons these days...but there are ways to use this love of cartoons to promote reading. Looking up YouTube videos may be the last thing you consider when thinking of how to get your child into reading, however, there are ways to turn your child's love of apps into a love of reading. Here's how.

Use videos to draw your child in

Did you know that for pretty much any book, there is an accompanying treasure trove of songs, animated movies, and read alouds to explore online? If your child is not yet interested in books, try watching the videos first. Once your little one loves the story they watched in video format, presenting them with the actual book will be exciting for them, because the book now holds new meaning and interest.


Expand their interests

Some kids find it hard to engage or be interested in reading, or only like one particular thing. My son has very specific tastes, and in order to expand his interests beyond his treasured *Pete the Cat* books, I began watching these mini-movies with him. We started with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* animated movie. He loves cartoons as most kids pretty much do. However, when presented with the actual book he was so excited.



Ms. Magnusson with her son and incoming CQA ES scholar, Noah.

Seeing/hearing/experiencing the story beforehand led to:

- More interest in the tangible manipulation of the pages. Before he watched it, now it is something he can actually hold.
 - More engagement in the actual words on the page because of the building of interest in the video.
 - Feeling a sense of confidence and familiarity around the story itself after having seen it first.
 - A sensory experience based on both watching and reading that reaches more learners.
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Turn their love of cartoons into a love of reading

Any children's books you have access to that you want to engage your child in can be used for this experiment. Simply search the title of the book on YouTube and look for an animated version of the story. There are also songs, elaborate read alouds, and even acting out of stories. See which would most interest your little one, and then watch together a few times. Next, present them with the book to read together. Eventually, through this process, your child will develop comfort and interest in holding, reading, and engaging with books, without the cartoon preview.

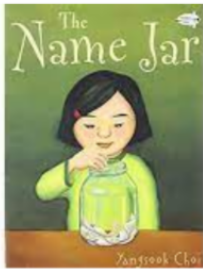
At that point, I began to offer the cartoon version as an activity we could do together **after reading the actual book.**

→ Check out *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* on YouTube.



Reader's Spotlight

Not sure what to read next? Take a look at these picks. All of these books are available at your local library.



The Name Jar
by Yangsook Choi



Eyes that Kiss in the Corners
by Joanna Ho



In My Heart
by Jo Witek



Why I Choose CQA Elementary School



"By being part of the CQA community, I see firsthand the level of education CQA scholars receive day in and day out. I can't wait for my daughter to be a part of this same community where both the administration and teachers ensure scholars have the best educational experience."

- Mr. Tipan, CQA IT Tech

At CQA ES, We Stand with Our AAPI Family

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



At CQA, we denounce the hate and violence against the AAPI community. We stand in solidarity, kindness, and support of our family.

