🍁 Celebrating Culture at Joan Snow
November 2026 Cultural Newsletter

November Theme: GRATITUDE • Core Value Affirmation: "I am thankful."

Dear Families and Staff,

November invites us to slow down and notice the people, traditions, and everyday moments that bring joy to our lives. As the leaves continue to change and families prepare for gatherings and traditions of their own, our children will explore culture through stories, music, art, family traditions, food, and our November Core Value of Gratitude.

🪔 Cultural Celebrations & Traditions

Diwali | Sunday, November 8

Diwali, often called the Festival of Lights, is celebrated by many Hindu, Jain, and Sikh families and by some Buddhist communities. Traditions vary among families and communities and may include lights, colorful decorations, special foods, family gatherings, and giving.

- **Cultural Learning:** Explore the ways families use light, decorations, food, and time together during celebrations.
- **Creative Expression:** Create colorful rangoli-inspired designs with classroom shapes or make paper lamps using safe art materials.
- **Explore/Discuss:** Ask, "What makes a celebration feel special in your family?"
- **Music & Movement:** Listen and move to child-friendly music connected to South Asian cultures, noticing rhythm and movement.

Native American Heritage Month | Throughout November

November is National Native American Heritage Month, a time to recognize the diverse cultures, languages, stories, traditions, and contributions of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. For young children, we will focus on Native peoples as living, diverse communities and learn through authentic stories, art, music, family, community, and connections to the natural world.

- **Cultural Learning:** Share age-appropriate books by Native authors and illustrators and learn that Native peoples belong to many distinct nations and communities.
- **Creative Expression:** Use open-ended art to explore nature, color, and storytelling rather than copying sacred, ceremonial, or culture-specific objects.
- **Explore/Discuss:** Talk about how families and communities pass along stories, songs, languages, and traditions.
- **Music & Movement:** When exploring music, use authentic child-appropriate resources that identify the Native artist or nation represented.

Family Gratitude & Gathering Traditions | Throughout November

Families celebrate and gather in many different ways during November. Some celebrate Thanksgiving, some have other traditions, and some may not observe a holiday at all. At

Joan Snow, we can make room for every family by focusing on gratitude, togetherness, favorite foods, and the traditions that are meaningful in each home.

- **Cultural Learning:** Invite children to notice that families may have different foods, languages, gatherings, and traditions—and all families are welcome.
- **Creative Expression:** Draw a favorite family meal, tradition, person, place, or activity.
- **Explore/Discuss:** Ask, "What is something your family enjoys doing together?" and "What are you thankful for?"
- **Community Connection:** Celebrate the many cultures represented at Joan Snow through family stories and our International Feast.

Important November Dates

Tuesday, November 3 — Election Day: remote learning day for students
Thursday, November 5 — Afternoon and evening parent-teacher conferences
Wednesday, November 11 — Veterans Day: schools closed
Monday, November 16 — Half day for students: 11:30 AM dismissal
Wednesday, November 25 — International Feast: details to follow
Thursday–Friday, November 26–27 — Thanksgiving Recess: schools closed

DATE	WHAT FAMILIES & STAFF SHOULD KNOW
November 3	Election Day — all NYCPS students learn remotely.
November 5	Parent-Teacher Conferences — Joan Snow half day; 11:30 a.m. dismissal.
November 8	Diwali — falls on Sunday in 2026. NYCPS has no weekday school closure for Diwali this year.
November 11	Veterans Day — schools closed.
November 16	Joan Snow half day — 11:30 a.m. dismissal.
November 25	Joan Snow International Feast — during school hours; details to follow.
November 26–27	Thanksgiving Recess — schools closed.

November Core Value: GRATITUDE

This month, Joan Snow continues our Core Values Framework with Gratitude— noticing and appreciating the people, experiences, and things that are meaningful to us. Children will explore gratitude through:

- Classroom stories and discussions
- Social-emotional learning activities

- Thank-you words, appreciation, and caring actions
- Our classroom and schoolwide Trees of Values
- Wellness Wednesday activities focused on gratitude, mindful noticing, and appreciation

November Mindfulness Connection: “I am thankful.” Children will practice Downward Dog and Flower Breath. Our Joan Snow scope and sequence also connects November with What I Like About Me, Gratitude Practice, Thankful Thursdays, and the International Food Fest.

November gives children many natural opportunities to practice gratitude: appreciating the people who care for them, listening to classmates’ family traditions, noticing what makes each family special, and experiencing the joy of belonging to a community.

🤝 **Exploring Culture & Gratitude at Home**

- **Storytime:** Read stories about family, gratitude, traditions, food, or community. Ask, “What did the character appreciate?”
- **Family Conversations:** At dinner or bedtime, invite each person to name one thing they are thankful for that day.
- **Creative Time:** Make a family gratitude collage with drawings or pictures of people, places, foods, traditions, and experiences your family appreciates.
- **Music & Movement:** Play music that is meaningful to your family. Dance together and tell your child who introduced the song or why your family enjoys it.
- **Family Traditions:** Talk about a food, recipe, gathering, or tradition that is special to your family. Your child can draw it or help with a simple part of preparing it.
- **Fall Gratitude Walk:** Take a short walk and each choose three things you are glad you noticed—a colorful leaf, a bird, cool air, a favorite building, or a friendly face.

🍁 By engaging in these activities and conversations, families can support children in developing empathy, cultural awareness, and gratitude. Thank you for being an active and valued part of our learning community.

We look forward to a November filled with learning, kindness, gratitude, and connection. Please reach out if you have any questions or would like additional resources.

Warm wishes for a wonderful 2026–2027 school year,
Rosalie Favuzza
Principal, Joan Snow Pre-K Center