

Engaging Families in After-school Activities

The Queens Community House (QCH) is a multi-site, multi-service settlement house that serves the diverse populations of Queens. We are dedicated to understanding the needs and challenges of the local residents in order to translate those challenges into enriching programs that can foster growth and create a sense of purpose for all individuals. We do this through a broad network of programs operating out of 24 sites in 11 neighborhoods.

The QCH Afterschool program at P.S. 117 in Jamaica, Queens is dedicated to getting our families and community involved by creating fun and engaging activities for our participants. Once our participants are excited about our activities, we find that their parents naturally wish to support them, take initiative, and become active participants in furthering our mission.



At our afterschool program, we not only engage our students with relevant topics such as the struggle for afterschool funding, social issues, and practicing leadership skills, but by engaging with the community at large.

For example, we encouraged our youth to raise awareness for the fight against breast cancer. Students enjoyed working together to create flyers and educating their peers and others about ways to reduce the risk of breast cancer.



Participants take it to the streets and talk with their feet!

We helped raise money for the Susan G. Komen Foundation and had a march around our school block. Our mothers were particularly supportive by joining us for our march!



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We are committed to providing activities that highlight the uniqueness of all participants and strengthen our school and community. Since we are committed to celebrating students' diversity, we have hosted family dinners. Our families speak about their cultural dishes so that it also becomes an educational experience for others. Students share their favorite dishes and recipes, and learn about different foods.

We've learned that our activities **MUST** be:

- ✓ Educational
- ✓ Inclusive
- ✓ Engaging
- ✓ Create a sense of belonging
- ✓ FUN, FUN, FUN



Our shows and events encourage families to spend quality time with each other. The events in the photos above and below are from our winter event, where we asked parents to bring in marshmallows so that they could build a snowman with their children. While parents enjoyed recharging after a busy day from work, students were thrilled to participate in this hands-on activity with their parents and share their work with other families.

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In all our after-school activities, we strive to always include our families and give everyone a sense of ownership over their growth and learning process. When parents maintain an active role in their child's education, it promotes active learning, makes students feel important, and allows them to feel confident when showcasing their hard work.

For more information, contact Diana Bacchus-Ramsamooj.
dbacchus@qchnyc.org.

