

**Hello Washington! Volume 3
Issue # 5 January 2024**



Celebrating Excellence, Innovation, and Growth!

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: Honoring Dedication at Washington Academy

Teachers' Day is celebrated in Venezuela every Jan. 15th. On this day schools are closed as teachers get a day off work. At Washington Academy we celebrate big time, and we commemorate not only our beloved faculty, but our wonderful staff, because teamwork is what makes our little world spin.

Days before, the curriculum in many subjects centered on this theme, and many activities, projects, and even bulletin boards featured many of our teachers. Throughout the rest of the week, Tuesday through Friday, students stood up in our small podium to express their gratitude towards their teachers. Poems were recited, touching letters were read, and spontaneous speeches were made by students from different grade levels. On Friday, January 19th, our students got an early dismissal, and our Admin, Faculty, and Staff got together in the covered court for a special seniority recognition ceremony. In this event, educators and administrative staff, with five or more years of continuous service at Washington Academy, were honored with beautiful pins. Faculty and Staff are given pins when they reach 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years of continuous work at our school. With 5 and 10 years, they receive a silver or golden pin. After 15 years, the pin is made of gold. At 20, 25, and 30, a small diamond is embedded into their gold pin. In addition, SPRAW also gives a token of appreciation to the awardees.



This year we celebrated the following:

5-year seniority



María Alejandra Arias



Sandra Bubreggh



Mariangélica Casanova



Gabriella López



Valentina Monsalve



María Eduvigis Pedriquez



Teresita Pérez



Silvia Russo



Carolina Serrano



Carola Silva



Tony Useche



María Elisa Vásquez

10-year seniority



Patricia Pérez

15-year seniority



Teresita Gutiérrez



Melicia García

20-year seniority



Ivette Liscano



Raquel López

35-year seniority



Valentina Antakly

After the pins were awarded, all teachers and staff's hard work was recognized with special gifts and a delicious Mexican-themed luncheon provided by our Board of Directors (BOD) and SPRAW.

Furthermore, many Washington families donated a variety of gifts that were raffled among everyone. We want to express our gratitude to the BOD, SPRAW members, and the following families for these gifts:

- Benarroch Cifuentes
- Bravo Alonso
- Cappellin Montilla
- Gómez Cedeño
- Hernández Rosales
- Moser Galavis
- Paz Hernández
- Ramírez Asa
- Ramos Morgado
- Renda Gil
- Somogyi Giardina
- Tálamo Peña
- Tannous Kassar
- Uranga Chebly
- Valladares Rodríguez
- Youssef Wehbe
- Zhang Wu

This week was a testament of gratitude, a celebration of the heroes who shape our tomorrow, one smile, one lesson, one heart at a time.





Washington Academy Embarks on Thrilling HMUN Journey

The Harvard Model United Nations (HMUN) is one of the oldest and most prestigious Model UN conferences in the United States. It's a four-day event where high school students like ours delve into the world of international relations by simulating the workings of the United Nations and other international bodies. Students take on the roles of diplomats, debating pressing global issues and crafting resolutions to address them.



Since May 2023, our Washington Academy delegation has been preparing for this year's HMUN. The culmination of their hard work came to life from Thursday, January 25th in the Opening Ceremony, 'til Sunday, January 28th.



It was an incredible journey for our 2024 team. Their dedication went beyond the classroom, from researching and practicing speeches at Boston's Public Library to exploring the vibrant campus of Harvard University. This dedication paid off, as eight of our 16 students returned home with well-deserved recognitions for their performance.



This isn't Washington Academy's first foray into the world of Model UN. For over 30 years, our school has proudly sent students to navigate the diplomatic landscapes of prestigious conferences like PAMUN, NHSMUN, and many more across the globe. We are continuously fostering global awareness and critical thinking skills in our young leaders.

We extend heartfelt congratulations to all of this year's HMUN participants, their supportive parents, dedicated teacher(s), and insightful coaches. Your hard work, dedication, and resilience throughout this journey are truly inspiring. We are incredibly proud of your accomplishments and look forward to seeing your continued growth as global citizens.



Clementina and Ana Elisa Haydon



Sofia Cases and Victoria Fernández



Sofia Cartolano and Ana Lorena Peuchert



Fabiana Berroterán and Carlota Ledezma



Alejandro Vásquez and Nikoletta Bacopulos



Sophia López



Isabella Márquez



Antonella De Santolo



Clementina Márquez



Daniela Youssef



Alessa Van Woerkom



Baruta's Public School Receives New Playground Thanks to SPRAW's contribution

The *Alcaldía de Baruta*, in partnership with the Parent Association SPRAW, is thrilled to announce the completion of a new preschool playground at *Jermán Ubaldo Lira* public school. SPRAW President, Luis Gómez, joined students and officials for the inauguration on January 30th, celebrating this exciting investment in the recreation and development of our future generations.



We believe this new addition will be a source of joy and enjoyment for these children for years to come, contributing to their physical and social development. Thank you to SPRAW and *Alcaldía de Baruta* for their dedication to our public school community.

New After School Program: Fostering a Love for Learning!

We are thrilled to announce that a new extracurricular program started on Tuesday, January 16, 2024! This program is led by our dedicated teacher, María Teresa Canzanese. The After School Program (ASP) aims to make homework time a special, meaningful, and fun experience for our students.

This program offers a variety of flexible monthly plans and runs Monday through Thursday, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. More than just assisting with homework, ASP is designed to:

- Foster a love for learning: By blending education with fun and engaging activities, ASP seeks to ignite curiosity and creativity in our students.
- Promote academic success: The program provides personalized assistance and resources to address individual learning needs, ensuring each student receives the support they need to excel.
- Develop essential skills: Students will develop valuable skills like time management, organization, and critical thinking through the program's activities.

Ultimately, ASP empowers students to take ownership of their education, cultivate a positive attitude towards learning, and build a strong foundation for future academic success.

If interested in learning more, please contact María Teresa Canzanese at awafterschoolprogram@gmail.com for further information and enrollment details.



This Program will focus on:

2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th

Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
3:00 To 5:00	3:00 To 5:00	3:00 To 5:00	3:00 To 5:00

Time	Activity
3:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Group Check-In
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM	Homework Session 1
4:00 PM - 4:30 PM	Work Break (Enrichment and Skill-Building Activities) (Including Bingo)
4:30 PM - 4:55 PM	Homework Session 2
4:55 PM - 5:00 PM	Wrap-Up
5:00 PM	Dismissal

*This schedule is subject to change. Parents will be notified of the progress the student made during our program hours. This will depend on the worksheet the student has at the time.

Exploring Geopolitics: 11th Grade Learns About the Essequibo Territory

On Thursday, January 18th, our 11th Grade students had the opportunity to dive into the complex geopolitical issue of the Essequibo Territory. Mr. Estrada, who holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and is currently pursuing a Master's in Political Science, led the engaging talk. Mr. Estrada, also a university professor, provided valuable insights into this disputed territory.

The informative session, held in the multipurpose room from 2:00 - 3:20 pm, was coordinated by our IBDP Global Politics teacher. Students learned about the Essequibo Territory, a region currently controlled by Guyana but also claimed by Venezuela. They explored the historical roots of this ongoing dispute, including the Geneva Agreement, and why the Essequibo Territory's location and resources make it strategically significant.

We're excited to provide our students with opportunities to engage with real-world issues and broaden their understanding of global affairs.



Recycling Innovators Visit WA

On the morning of Monday, January 22nd, our 8th and 9th Grade students enjoyed a fascinating presentation on "Recycling in Venezuela and its Implications." The talk, held in the multipurpose room, was delivered by Gabriel Santana and Alberto Alfonso, founders of the innovative entrepreneurship *Taller Neo* (@taller.neo). This event was coordinated by our IB MYP Action and Service teacher and our Biology Department Head.

Taller Neo specializes in transforming waste into valuable objects. They work with plastics like polypropylene and high-density polyethylene, creating a remarkable array of usable items including t-shirts, backpacks, shoes, eyeglass frames, wallets, plastic pots, and more. Students learned about the importance of recycling and were inspired by *Taller Neo's* creative approach.

This engaging talk wasn't just informative, it provided valuable insights for our 8th and 9th graders. They gained a deeper understanding of the impact of recycling on the environment, and were motivated by the possibilities of transforming waste into useful objects. Seeing *Taller Neo's* innovative approach firsthand sparked their creativity and encouraged them to think critically about their own environmental impact, both at school and in their daily lives. This aligns perfectly with the school's commitment to fostering environmental awareness and responsible citizenship in our students.

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December Delights: Gifts of Giving, Growing, and Gathering

Washington Family Patinata: A Joyful Roller-Skating Event



On Friday, December 1st, the Washington family enjoyed a very special afternoon roller-skating at our traditional Patinata organized by SPRAW (Sociedad de Padres y Representantes Academia Washington).

From 4 in the afternoon to almost 10 at night, our school grounds turned into a lively hub of family spirit, powered by happy wheels, festive cheer, and Christmas ornaments.

This cherished tradition is not just about kids enjoying their gear. It's a joyful blend of families coming together, sharing smiles, eating delicious food and celebrating the season.

Safety is always our priority. Our devoted SPRAW parent coordinators carefully planned the asphalt, assigning separate areas for each grade level. And in case of any mishaps, a friendly ambulance was ready, waiting to lend a hand.

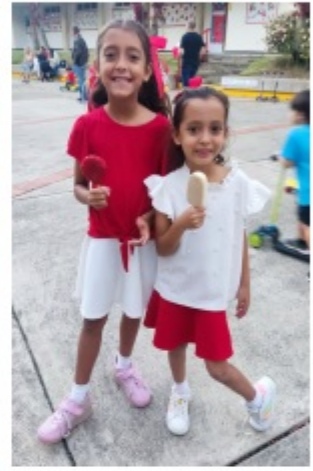
For the first time in a long while, bicycles and hoverboards were allowed for Upper Elementary Students (5th-12th Grade). Making the Patinata more appealing for older students.

But the Patinatas are more than just kids having fun. They're about creating a sense of belonging, a feeling that echoes stronger than the joyful screams coming from the two bouncer castles and trampoline – thanks to our amazing SPRAW team!

While little legs jumped high in the sky, older siblings skated the asphalt with their parents, grandparents, and friends.

Kudos to the Senior moms who organized a food and drinks presale (the day before) and on-site sale! A variety of delicious foods were offered such as: Full Queso's tequeños and bubble tea, Mr. Patty's burgers, Rahil's pernil sandwiches and popcorn, and La Paletta Margariteña's popsicle sticks, among others.

So, cheers to the Washington Family Patinatas: a joyful tribute to the power of wheels, family spirit, and the magic of Christmas!





Washington's Christmas Concert Ends Term and Year on a High Note



Washington was swept into a whirlwind of festive flair on Tuesday, December 12th, from 8 to 9:45 am, as the traditional Christmas Concert unfolded. The Covered Court, transformed by Room Mothers' dazzling handiwork, pulsed with joy and merriment.

Our beloved Principal and Preschool Coordinator kicked off the event with open arms, thanking everyone for joining and reminding us of the season's essence. Embracing inclusivity, the Shadah family shared Hannukah traditions, lighting a Menorah alongside the nativity scene in a beautiful tapestry of unity.

With the English Department Head weaving her magic, each class, donned in their holiday best, took the stage with vibrant musical offerings. From timeless American tunes to Venezuelan gaitas, the air throbbed with joyous melodies and synchronized steps.

Teachers' dedication shone through every act, their pupils beaming with confidence and delight. From the tiny Pre-K stars to the assured 7th graders, their sheer joy and infectious enthusiasm held the audience captive.

A special note of thanks goes to Eduardo Behrens, whose audio wizardry ensured a flawless and memorable event.

It was a morning brimming with heartwarming music, cultural understanding, and the timeless joy of the holidays.





A Jolly Jamboree: Our School Celebrates Christmas in Style!

On Monday, December 11th, the halls decked with boughs of holly, hearts light with cheer, and our big park's little house transformed into a winter wonderland – Christmas had arrived, and the festive spirit was contagious!

Our littlest learners, the Preschoolers, sparkled in their holiday finery, ready for a day dripping with magic. Their classroom, adorned with playful ornaments, hummed with excitement. A candy-colored feast awaited them, a delightful prelude to the star attraction – Santa himself!

Imagine the wide-eyed wonder as each child received a personalized Christmas mailbox overflowing with goodies. Whispered wishes, joyful giggles, and beautiful photos with Santa captured the pure essence of childhood holiday magic.

The fun spilled over to our Lower and Upper Elementary students, whose tables groaned with festive treats, a smorgasbord of deliciousness fueling their boundless energy. Laughter echoed through the hallways as they cherished their post-exam freedom, their joy a delightful blend of holiday spirit and well-deserved relaxation.

And just when you thought the day couldn't get any merrier, an early dismissal sent our happy elves and sugarplum fairies bouncing out the door, hearts brimming with Christmas cheer.

And so, with bellies full of treats and spirits soaring high, we closed our 1st term, not with a sigh, but with a happy hum, carrying the warmth of Christmas cheer into vacation days ahead.









Santa's Helpers in Disguise: School Spreads Holiday Happiness Through Donations

On December 6th and 7th, Washington's generous Christmas spirit was shown through different donations. Our Board of Directors' President and Vice President, Mili and Gina, organized the traditional toy drive, held throughout the month of November. Families demonstrated their kindness and support by bringing lots of toys that were donated to our maintenance staff's children, and other institutions such as UEE Lola Amengual de Gondelles (school for the deaf). Our Principal, María Elena Abreu, on behalf of Washington Academy donated new toys for Operación Juguetes 2023, a local charity organized by Baruta's Town Hall. In addition, two baskets with materials and ingredients needed to prepare Hallacas were donated to Baruta's Municipal Police. Through collaboration and kindness, Washington Academy's generous spirit made a tangible difference in the lives of others during this festive season.



Teachers Rock the End-of-Term Holiday Bash!

On Friday, December 15th, our Board of Directors invited SPRAW members and employees, WA Faculty and Staff, including maintenance and surveillance, for a delicious lunch in our covered court area which was set up as an elegant dining hall. The opening ceremony was a speech by our Principal Maria Elena Abreu, and by the Board's Vice President, Gina Salas. They gave thanks to everyone for their hard work throughout our first trimester and motivated everyone to continue striving for excellence in everything that we do. Towards the end of dessert, a group of Lower Elementary teachers took on the stage to sing and dance "Candy Cane Lane" as everyone followed with singing. After the presentation, teachers and staff got up from their seats to sing karaoke and dance along. With full bellies and even fuller hearts, we returned home ready for the holidays, carrying the warm glow of appreciation for everyone's dedication and the unwavering hope that we'd return next year, ready to write another extraordinary chapter together.

Empowering Parents: "Understanding Puberty: Tools to Enjoy This New Stage" by Dr. Lila Vega

Forget puberty puzzles, think parent power! Dr. Lila Vega, renowned pediatrician, rocked our school on Thursday, December 7th with a jam-packed session titled "Understanding Puberty: Tools to Enjoy This New Stage." For two electrifying hours, she dispelled myths and empowered 56 guardians with practical tools to navigate the rollercoaster of puberty alongside their kids.



Dr. Vega's deep dive covered not just bodies and hormones, but the emotional, social, and even spiritual shifts, giving parents a holistic roadmap for support. From open communication to setting boundaries, she equipped parents to be their child's champion, confidante, and guide every step of the way.

Questions flew, experiences were shared, and laughter mingled with heartfelt moments as parents bonded over the shared mission of raising amazing humans. This wasn't just a talk; it was a game-changer. Our school is proud to champion such initiatives, ensuring families and students thrive during this pivotal chapter.

This initiative reflects our unwavering commitment to supporting our families and contributing to the well-being of our students during this critical stage of their lives. We know puberty can be challenging, but with Dr. Vega's insights and the powerful network of empowered parents, our students are on track to tackle adolescence with confidence and grace.



Value of the Month: **Solidarity**

At Washington Academy, we've flipped the script on education. While we value academic excellence, we believe true success blooms when knowledge meets character. We're not cookie-cutter crafters of "A" students; we're architects of well-rounded individuals armed with both wisdom and unwavering values.

Our secret weapon? Our dynamic Counseling Department, the mastermind behind a program that's less textbook, more character compass. Each month, we dive headfirst into a chosen value, turning our school into a living lab for ethical exploration. Think morning announcements buzzing with discussions on empathy, counseling sessions that become personalized workshops on resilience, and bulletin boards transformed into vibrant galleries of kindness. We don't just preach good – we show you how to do it.

This month, we're flexing our collective muscle of Solidarity, building bridges of unity and shared responsibility. Imagine a school where helping hands know no boundaries, where differences become strengths, and where compassion is the coolest kid in class. That's the future we're building, brick by empathetic brick.

This journey isn't just for the chosen few; it's a classroom without walls, open to every member of our community. Come join us, lend your voice to the symphony of values, and watch us rewrite the narrative of education. Together, we'll raise a generation not just equipped with knowledge, but empowered to change the world with character, compassion, and a fierce determination to leave it a better place than we found it.

