



Principal Joyce Chapnick

Be A Friend Project “Evening With Friends” Honoree

Joyce Chapnick currently serves as the very proud principal of Main Street School in Irvington, New York, a role she has embraced for the past ten years of her 25-year-long career in education. With a deep commitment to fostering a kind, respectful, and inclusive environment, Joyce's leadership extends beyond the traditional boundaries of the classroom, offering students unique opportunities to be global citizens and Makers of Change.

Joyce's journey in education began with a childhood passion for teaching, demonstrated by her early experiences teaching her younger siblings to read. This passion solidified during her senior options project in high school, where she interned with her third-grade teacher, essentially leading the class for six weeks. As she pursued her degree in history at Columbia University, she concurrently completed the necessary courses to obtain her teaching certificate.

Upon graduation, Joyce started her teaching career at PS 5 in Washington Heights, followed by a transition to PS 11 on the Lower East Side, where she earned her Master's degree at New York University while teaching fourth grade. Upon earning her Master's, Joyce accepted a new position teaching third grade at Concord Road Elementary School in Ardsley, New York. Her commitment to professional development and learning led her to Columbia University's Teacher's College, where she engaged in ongoing learning through institutes and participated in leadership learning circles.

A new opportunity emerged as Joyce took on the role of a Teaching Learning Facilitator, a literacy coach, in the Irvington, New York school district. She eventually entered administration, serving as the assistant principal of Irvington Middle School, a position she held for five years before returning to her passion for elementary education. She accepted the principalship at Main Street School in 2014, where she has dedicated herself to creating a positive and inclusive learning environment.

At Main Street School, Joyce collaborates with her teachers and staff to provide students with opportunities to learn within and beyond classroom walls. Through the curriculum, teachers address vital topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, family structures and more. Explicit lessons focus on honoring our many identities and social-emotional learning, creating an environment where every child feels accepted, welcome and safe to come to school to learn.

Joyce's impact extends beyond the traditional realms of education through her inclusion of programs like the Be A Friend Project (BAFP). Joyce started her collaboration with the project in 2017 when she took Main Street School students to Irvington Town Hall Theater to see a performance of *IT'S EASY! The Friend Strong Musical*, the show that launched the “kids for kids” anti-bullying organization. Since, under Joyce's inspirational leadership, Main Street School has participated *schoolwide* in the project's Friend Mail Program. Each school month since 2017, all students write letters of peer support to children across the country traumatized by bullying (and featured by the BAFP) to help them stay strong and know they are not alone.

In 2018, Joyce received the BAFP Super Ambassador Educator Award. In January of 2021, Main Street School was selected to receive the project's inaugural "SUPER AMBASSADOR SCHOOL" distinction and plaque for its seven-year and ongoing schoolwide commitment of administration, staff and students as BAFP 'Upstanders' working to end bullying and its tragic consequences, and for making empathy and kindness educational priorities. Joyce continues her visionary and innovative support of the Be A Friend Project, for example, helping develop and implement the BAFP's first Impact Survey in 2022. Joyce has been named the 2024 Honoree of the Be A Friend Project's annual event, “Evening With Friends.” The Honoree Award celebrates Joyce's enduring dedication to creating a better, more just and caring world for all, and to her driven engagement of students in the mission of the BAFP to end bullying, save lives and build kinder communities.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Joyce is married for twenty years to her supportive and patient husband, Jason, and is a proud parent to seventeen-year-old Zachary and eleven-year-old Sadie.