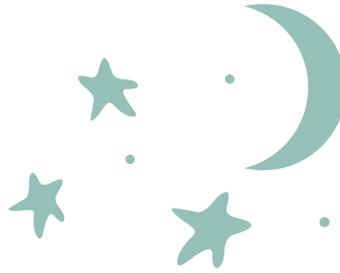




The Marigold



PS 527 MENTAL WELLNESS QUARTERLY

PS 527 Monthly Value Quotes

For our monthly value of Empathy in January, two students read this wonderful poem in Spanish and in English over the loudspeaker.

IN LAK'ECH: YOU ARE MY OTHER ME

Tú eres mi otro yo.
 You are my other me.
 Si te hago daño a ti,
 If I do harm to you,
 Me hago daño a mi mismo.
 I do harm to myself.
 Si te amo y respeto,
 If I love and respect you,
 Me amo y respeto yo.
 I love and respect myself.

*By Luis Valdez and
Domingo Martinez Paredes*

Learn more about the poem here:
vue.annenberginstitute.org/perspectives/lak'ech-you-are-my-other

Inside this Issue

Equity at PS 527.....Page 2
 Mental Health in the News.....Page 3
 Parent Engagement and Updates.....Page 4
 Book RecommendationsPage 5
 5 Minute Mindfulness.....Page 6

Mental Health Resources

Check out the Mental Health Resources tab on our school website for more information.

Child Mind Institute

www.childmind.org

An independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children struggling with mental health and learning disorders.



1-888-NYC-WELL

nycwell.cityofnewyork.us

In almost any language, NYC Well is a hotline that can provide crisis counseling, connection to peer support and short-term counseling, and assistance scheduling appointments or accessing other mental health services.





Racial Equity and Cultural Responsivness and at PS 527

Ms. Nana Evans and Ms. Jessica Semmel lead our Equity team and our Racial Equity professional development for the staff. Each grade team describes how we are applying what we are learning in our classrooms.

A complex system of biases and structural inequities is at play, deeply rooted in our country's history, culture, and institutions. This system of inequity -which routinely confers advantage and disadvantage based on linguistic background, gender, skin color and other characteristics must be clearly understood, directly challenged and fundamentally transformed. Culturally Responsive Education helps educators create student-centered learning environments that: affirm racial and cultural identities; prepare students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices and empower students as agents of social change.

-Ms. Nana Evans and Ms. Jessica Semmel

KINDERGARTEN

The Kindergarten team has created a welcoming and affirming classroom environment. This environment ensures all cultural identities (i.e. race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, language, religion, socioeconomic background) are affirmed, valued, and used as vehicles for teaching and learning. Materials that represent and affirm student identities have been incorporated in our curriculum. We are currently using resources written and developed by racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives.

FIRST GRADE

First grade teachers use the "Stop, Ask, and Re-Think: Representation Matters" guide as a reminder to carefully choose texts. We want each child to feel included and important each day. There remains much to be desired as far as racially equitable curriculum materials and we are constantly looking for ways to enrich and improve our resources to better reflect our students and meet their needs as conscientious citizens. We also strive to inspire students to think critically and ask questions rather than accept content as fact. We believe that this combination of thoughtfully selected resources and an approach that encourages inquiry leads students to feel included, informed and empowered.

SECOND GRADE

Second grade has been working hard to revisit our curriculum from a racial lens. In a grade where we learn about the civil war, slavery, and activism, it is so important to show a variety of racial and gender based viewpoints. Through our classroom discussions we have been able to offer new historical viewpoints about events in our

country's past. What we have seen and heard has been really impressive as the students make connections to past material they've learned or current events today. We really wanted to tackle an entire unit and revamp it through a racial and gender based lens. We did that this year with our biography unit. Previously, we unconsciously had made the mentor texts primarily white male dominated. This year we flipped the gender entirely and did only females. We also made sure to represent a wide variety of expertise, subject areas, and races. We wanted to offer viewpoints and perspectives that represent not the majority in the classroom, but instead all of the individuals who make up our whole.

THIRD GRADE

Third Graders put on a successful play, "Around the World with Third Grade" based on our Global Studies curriculum. Students researched different countries and wrote a skit or poem with their group. When picking countries to research, our team was very intentional about choosing countries that represent various cultures and races. Throughout the preparation, the three classes had many conversations about representation and cultural awareness.

FOURTH GRADE

In fourth grade we have continued to use our monthly poetry books as a way to expose students to the PS 527 Monthly Values. Additionally, throughout guided reading, we have been using some new chapter books that expose the students to many important themes related to equity and diversity. The students have really been doing a spectacular job thinking deeply about the messages within these stories and make very insightful contributions during our literature circle meetings!

FIFTH GRADE

In fifth grade, we have been making a conscious effort to incorporate texts written by diverse authors into our curriculum in order to give our students exposure to experiences of people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures that may be different from their own. We have been having courageous conversations with our students in which we discuss how to speak up at school and how to respond to everyday prejudice, bias and stereotypes. We have also discussed the role of insidious bias and how it can be harmful, especially to people of color.



Responding to Mental Health in the News: Racial Equity



EmbraceRace www.embracerace.org is an excellent resource for adults to prepare themselves for conversations with children about racial justice. As adults, we have our own experiences, feelings and opinions that can influence our comfort with the topic of race. This resource can serve as a guide for anyone interested in educating themselves about talking to children about race. While the whole website is rich with resources, there is a “tip sheet” for speaking to children about racial injustice that is particularly useful. www.embracerace.org/uploads/1/0/3/1/103189290/young_kids_racial_injustice.pdf



This guide for teachers www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Speak_Up_at_School.pdf from the fantastic magazine “Teaching Tolerance” by the Southern Poverty Law Center gives a glimpse into best practices for how P.S. 527 teachers aim to approach racial equity in our school. Just like we study child development, literacy education and math strategies, teachers need to educate and prepare for challenging conversations about race. There are numerous occasions in our classroom community to directly or indirectly help our students overcome biases and approach others equitably. We can mean well, but unless we take the time to learn, analyze and reflect, we will most likely find ourselves confronted with a moment feeling unprepared and therefore an opportunity is lost. We are grateful that this guide exists!

Child Mind Institute

We recommend subscribing to Child Mind Institute, an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children struggling with mental health and learning disorders.

www.childmind.org

Talking to Kids About Race & Violence in America

It is important to talk to children truthfully and to explain ways that injustice is being addressed within the community.

childmind.org/blog/talking-kids-race-violence-america/

Teaching Kids About Boundaries:

Why empathy and self-awareness play a major role

Children need to develop empathy and self-awareness in order to understand boundaries.

Parents can help children learn to respect other people’s boundaries by understanding their perspectives and embracing diversity. They can teach their kids to set their own boundaries and

reinforce the importance by taking them seriously.

childmind.org/article/teaching-kids-boundaries-empathy/

How to Arm Your Child Against Bullying:

And why are kids so mean to each other, anyway?

Parents can help their children understand and identify bullying. They can give their children tools for dealing with bullying and helping others.

childmind.org/article/how-to-arm-your-child-against-bullying/



Update from Ms. Jen Ludwig, Parent Coordinator

For my February Parent Support Group Meeting, the topic was *Combating Racial Bias in Children*. It was an informative and vibrant discussion led by Principal Dan, and also present in addition to several parents and myself were Mary our Guidance Counselor along with Ms. Nana and Ms. Jessica S., who have been leading the staff this year in the continuation of our Racial Equity professional development group which Principal Dan began with us last year. After going through some of the background and importance of this topic in education and in general, we discussed many specific examples of racial bias in our world today as well as how we, as educators and parents, can begin to unpack and confront this difficult topic with our children. There are many strategies we can use to help children deal with racial bias, including talking to our children (even from a young age) about it, confronting our own biases, and encouraging our children to challenge racial stereotypes and racial bias.

Kindness Stickers

By Ms. Rosa Biaggi

Recently, we have launched a school-wide practice called Kindness Stickers, and the results have been truly inspiring! "Kindness is definitely contagious. The more that we experience kindness in our lives, the more we want to pass it on to others, creating a domino effect in our classrooms," explained Ms. Amy Davidowitz, the KC teacher who initiated Kindness Stickers. When a student is caught showing a sign of extraordinary kindness, a teacher makes an announcement, and their class celebrates through sudden applause or cheer as the teacher sticks a kindness sticker onto their shirt like a badge of honor. The student caught spreading kindness brings a slip of paper signed by their teacher down to the office to put into the Kindness Bucket. This slip of paper indicates the student's name, class, and kind deed. As students walk downstairs to the office with their sticker, several teachers, staff and Principal Dan smile as they enthusiastically congratulate the student. During Morning Announcements, the reminder of the student's kindness continues as their name, class, and kindness are shared for the whole school to hear. A second grader proudly reflected on winning a kindness sticker, saying "My classmates cheered for me when we heard my name. Winning a kindness sticker made me feel happy, and it made me feel really rewarded, too." Students have become increasingly motivated by this influential example of positive reinforcement. We are all excited to continue rewarding students for exemplary acts of kindness!



Dear Marigold

QUESTIONS FROM PARENTS FOR PS 527 STAFF



If you have a question that you would like us to answer in a future issue, please email Marigold@ps527.org

Dear Marigold,

My child came home from school upset about a conflict earlier in the day at lunch. What advice can I give to help de-escalate and navigate these types of situations?

Dear Reader,

This article highlights five strategies to help children build the skills to calm down and resolve their own conflicts. We hope it helps!

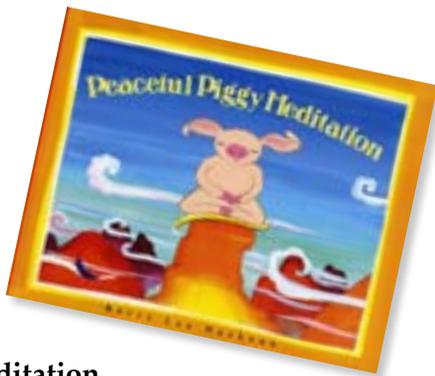
www.pbs.org/parents/expert-tips-advice/2018/11/5-strategies-to-help-kids-resolve-conflict/



Recommendations from The PS 527 Monthly Values Book Collection

In addition to our Mental Health Library at PS 527, we also have a collection of books related to each of our Monthly Values. If you have recommendations for great books that you think should be included in our Mental Health Library or our Monthly Values collection, please let us know at Marigold@ps527.org.

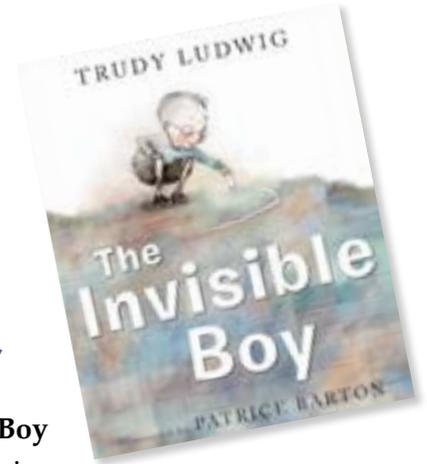
December: PEACE



Peaceful Piggy Meditation
by Kerry Lee MacLean

This book is ideal for children in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Along with fun illustrations of meditating pigs, the book walks children through the importance of meditating when they are mad, sad, or anxious. It includes activities and directions for family meditation in the back so everyone in the family can work to find peace together!

January: EMPATHY



The Invisible Boy
by Trudy Ludwig

This beautiful picture book follows the story of Brian, who feels invisible, since his teacher and classmates don't seem to notice him. He finds comfort in his imaginative drawings, and ends up befriending a new student, finally feeling visible. The illustrations follow the evolution of Brian's emotions, moving from gray and white to joyful color. This book can provide a jumping off point for many discussions about empathy for ourselves and for others.

February: EMPOWERMENT



The Thing Lou Couldn't Do
by Ashley Spires

Lou and her friends like to go on brave adventures together. But when her friends suggest climbing a tree and pretending it's their pirate ship, Lou is nervous. She doesn't know if she can climb a tree, so she comes up with a list of excuses. In the end, with the support of her friends, Lou learns that she can do anything she sets her mind to.



PS 527 Mental Health Committee

Our Mental Health Committee was formed in 2016 after the launch of the Thrive NYC initiative, which is addressing and destigmatizing mental illness. We meet several times a year to discuss how we can incorporate mental wellness in our classrooms, and to plan the content of this newsletter.

Mission Statement

PS 527 is dedicated to providing support for the mental health needs of our school community by:

- Ending the stigma associated with mental health issues by fostering a culture of knowledge and acceptance.
- Maintaining an inclusive culture through:
 - Daily bucket filling reminders (aligned to the book, "How Full is Your Bucket?", by Tom Rath).
 - Implementing the PS 527 Monthly Values
 - Promoting respect for others.
- Teaching healthy coping mechanisms and problem-solving strategies in Social Skills class.
- Promoting mindfulness through Staff Mindful Mornings, student-led Mindful Moments, and sharing of best practices in the classroom.
- Encouraging empathy and understanding.
- Using the Mood Meter to increase emotional intelligence and develop mental health vocabulary.
- Providing resources to parents and staff about mental health organizations.

The Story of The Marigold



The name of this newsletter is inspired by the article, "[*Find Your Marigold: The One Essential Rule for New Teachers*](#)", by Jennifer Gonzalez. The idea is that positive and supportive attitudes spread like marigolds and improve chances of excelling as a teacher. Gonzalez explains *The Marigold Effect*, "Marigolds exist in our schools as well – encouraging, supporting and nurturing growing teachers on their way to maturity. If you can find at least one marigold in your school and stay close to them, you will grow. Find more than one and you will positively thrive." At PS 527, we strive to be marigolds for one another.

5 Minute Mindfulness

The theme of this season's 5 Minute Mindful Moment is Superheroes because we all have a superpower! It includes both a breathing exercise and a series of poses.

Wonder Woman Breath

- On the inhale, hold one hand over your head and pretend to spin a lasso.
- As you exhale, pretend to throw the lasso.
- Repeat as needed.

Benefits: This lets you breathe your power by fighting stress, releasing tension, and helping you let go of big emotions.

Superhero Affirmations

- Start in Mountain Pose with your hands in front of your heart and say, "I am brave."
- Move into Warrior 1 and say, "I am strong."
- Move into Warrior 2 and say, "I am peaceful."
- Move into Warrior 3 and say, "I am a superhero."
- Move back into Mountain with your hands in front of your heart and say, "I am love."

{If you are unsure of how to do the Warrior poses, YouTube has great videos demonstrating them.}