



# The Marigold

## PS 527 MENTAL WELLNESS QUARTERLY

### 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 once per month, and our committee is made up of staff members including Mary Polito, Jennifer Ludwig, Lauren Davis, Morgan DeTura, Chessa Kenney, Hillary Tilton, and Jessica Clark.

### 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).
  - 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.

### Mental Health Resources

#### Child Mind Institute

[www.childmind.org](http://www.childmind.org)

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



[thrivenyc.cityofnewyork.us](http://thrivenyc.cityofnewyork.us)



1-888-NYC-WELL

[nycwell.cityofnewyork.us](http://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.





## 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.



*The Mood Meter in class 1-201. Student names are on the back of a white square, which can be stuck to the poster.*

## The Mood Meter in our Classrooms

The first graders have been practicing using the Mood Meter to identify their feelings and what events can cause those feelings. We read the book *Today I Feel Silly* by Jamie Lee Curtis to explore all the different moods one may experience throughout the day. We brainstormed a list of feeling words and using the colors of the Mood Meter quadrants, we color-coded the feeling words (red= high energy unpleasant, yellow= high energy pleasant, blue= low energy unpleasant and green= low energy pleasant). It has been exciting to hear students use Mood Meter language throughout the day. We discussed how all feelings are okay, even the unpleasant ones, even if they don't feel good. Next, we will start plotting feelings on the Mood Meter and then we will talk about how we can shift from one mood to another.



*Pod 11 reflects on the book , Martin & Mahalia: His Words, Her Song, by Andrea Davis Pinkney*

### **Qualities That We Value: Empathy and Understanding**

This year, PS 527 launched PEA pods. PEA stands for Peer Engagement Activities, and each group of children is a “pod.” Each pod consists of a school lineage, including one or two children from each grade. The pods meet every month to do specific activities. The pod groups will stay the same each year, offering an opportunity for children to get to know students in other grades and develop friendships with people they might not normally interact with at school.

The PEA Pods program reflects qualities that we value by facilitating activities for students to learn about and practice empathy and understanding for themselves and others. In March, each PEA Pod read a different social action themed book. We worked together to reflect on the meaning of the book by making connections to our own lives and the world around us. Each pod reflected on the main idea presented in the books as well as how the characters stood up for what was important to them. Each pod’s ideas were then joined together in our own “Book of Social Action Books.”



## PS 527 Weekly Mindful Moments

Each week, a student reads a meaningful quote over the loudspeaker after the morning announcements. The quotes are posted in all classrooms. The following are some of the quotes that we have used this year:

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**“I did then what I  
knew how to do.  
Now that I know  
better, I do better.”**

*- Maya Angelou*

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**“In giving of  
yourself, you will  
discover a whole  
new life full of  
meaning and love.”**

*- Cesar Chavez*

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**“Empathy is really important...  
Only when our clever brain  
and our human heart work  
together in harmony can we  
achieve our true potential.”**

*- Jane Goodall*

## Helpful Links and Book Recommendations

**15 Ways to Teach Mindfulness to Kids:**  
[elearninginfographics.com/teach-mindfulness-kids-infographic](http://elearninginfographics.com/teach-mindfulness-kids-infographic)

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**Understanding the Way I Feel:  
30 Books About Managing Emotions:**  
[www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=11449](http://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=11449)

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**Mind Yeti** offers short mindfulness videos for kids. Several videos are accessible with a free membership. [www.mindyeti.com](http://www.mindyeti.com)

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**Mindshift** explores the future of learning in all its dimensions. Mindshift examines how learning is being impacted by: technology, discoveries about how the brain works, poverty and inequities, social and emotional practices, assessments, digital games, design thinking and music, among many other topics.  
[www.kqed.org/mindshift](http://www.kqed.org/mindshift)

## 5 Minute Mindfulness

This exercise is called *five senses*, and can be practiced frequently to bring yourself into a mindful state.

Notice the things that you *see*.

Notice the things that you *feel*.

Notice the things that you *hear*.

Notice the things that you *smell*.

Notice the things that you *taste*.