

Riverside School
Princeton, NJ

Winter 2015
Volume 7, Issue 2

Riverside School Counseling Newsletter

What's New?

This winter, Riverside is engaging in a "Campaign of Kindness," with the goal of spreading kindness and positivity throughout the school.

For several days in December, students found Take-A-Smile posters, where they could rip off a "smile" and give it to a friend or teacher.

We also started a classroom kindness chain, where each class received the name of another class at Riverside. One class was chosen to start the chain, and they worked together to do a random act of kindness for the class that was chosen for them. The acts of kindness ranged in complexity, from making cards or singing a song to inviting the other class for a special recess. Once each class performed their random act of kindness, the next class continued the chain! This activity has been a big hit.

This month, we also brought back our random acts of kindness bulletin board, where students can pull down an act of kindness, complete it and then drop it in the bucket. We should reach our goal of 1,000 random acts of kindness by the end of the month!

We also have gratitude letter templates available outside our Child Study team office. Students are able to take a letter and let a friend or adult know they are grateful for them. It was so much fun watching these get passed around Riverside. My favorite moment was a fifth grade girl who wrote her Kindergarten teacher a gratitude letter and surprised her with it. It was touching.

Wishing everyone a happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Ben Samara
Riverside School Counselor

Tips For Practicing Gratitude

Adapted from an article by Sally O'Reilly and Tanya Tinney

Say Thank You

Easiest way to start. Thank your grocery checker. Thank your children, parents, aunt, friend. Thank them for everything and anything. Mean it

Accept Thank You's

When someone says 'thank you,' a simple 'you're welcome' is gratitude multiplied.

Take a moment to reach out

Send a thank you note, letter or text. Everyone likes to be appreciated. And it's never too late. A day, month, year or decade later – it doesn't matter.

Keep a journal

This does not have to be lengthy or complicated. A notebook or a note on your iPhone. Jot down three or more things you're grateful for each day.

Talk about it

Gratitude breeds gratitude. Talk with your family and children about things you are grateful for. Ask even small children about their 'best moments' of the day. You might be surprised how much you learn about yourself and your little ones.

Be mindful

Practicing mindfulness keeps us grounded in the present moment. Which allows us to more clearly appreciate and see things to be grateful for (our health, the weather, a smell).

Be kind to yourself!

If you are not grateful for yourself, for who you are, where you have been, and how far you have come - how are you going to be able to truly recognize and share gratitude with others?



QUICK TIPS

Seven quick tips for helping your child manage stress:

Adapted from PsychCentral.com

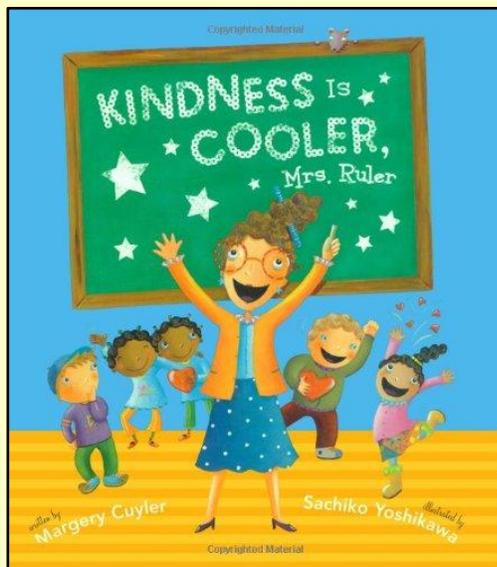
- Stop overscheduling
- Make time for play
- Make sleep a priority
- Teach your children to listen to their bodies
- Manage your own stress
- Make mornings calmer
- Prepare your kids to deal with their mistakes

Book of the Month

Kindness is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler
by Margery Cuyler

"When Mrs. Ruler asks five of her kindergarteners to miss recess, she's got a special plan up her sleeve. She's about to teach a new golden rule: Kindness is cool! Soon the entire class is doing so many good deeds that their kindness bulletin board barely fits their classroom!

Count along with Mrs. Ruler's class. Can all their good deeds really add up to 100 acts of kindness?" (book description from Amazon.com)



Helpful Websites

GoNoodle

<http://www.gonoodle.com>

Although this is a pay website, there are some outstanding activities to get kids moving. I know of several teachers who use GoNoodle in the classroom, and these activities can translate to home as well!

Parent Previews

<http://www.parentpreviews.com>

One of many movie review sites geared towards parents. For every movie, this site gives letter grades and descriptions for a variety of categories like language, adult content, drug/alcohol use, and violence along with detailed reviews.

Found a great website you'd like Mr. Samara to know about? Please e-mail me at:

ben_samara@princetonk12.org

Important Dates

January 18

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 1-5

National School Counselor Week!

March 22-24

Riverside Parent Conferences

March 25-April 3

Spring Recess

About Mr. Samara

Ben Samara is Riverside's School Counselor. He is available to answer any question you may have about your child's academic, emotional or social progress.

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