

# HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Riverside School  
Princeton, NJ

February 2011  
Volume 2, Issue 3

## Riverside School Counseling Newsletter

### What's New?

Happy February! I hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable winter break and holiday season. While snow has wreaked havoc on our school schedule, our students continue to rise to the occasion. We are having a great year here at Riverside!

I am very excited that our yearly "Guys Group" has begun in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I collaborate with our physical education teacher, Ron Celestin, to co-facilitate these groups. We have two sections of the guys group that alternate from week to week, focusing on skills such as assertiveness, listening, communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution. The group was very successful last year and Mr. Celestin and I have some fun things in store this time around!

I am also happy to announce that we have booked renowned New Jersey magician Ken Northridge and his Character Education Magic Show for Tuesday, February 15. Mr. Northridge will perform two shows in the morning, one for students in grades Pre-K through 2 and another for students in grades 3 through 5. More information about Mr. Northridge can be found on the back of this newsletter.

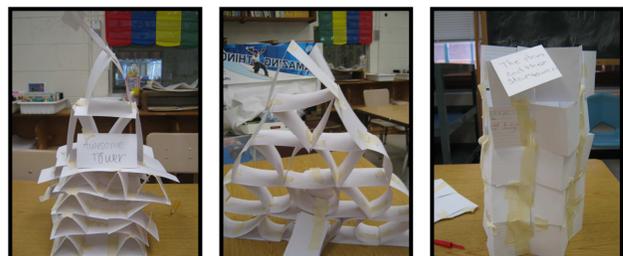
Also in February, the Teen Advisory Group (TAG) from Corner house will do their yearly workshop with our 5<sup>th</sup> graders focusing on drug and alcohol awareness. This is an important workshop and I am thrilled to welcome them back. If you have any questions about the TAG workshop, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Finally, I am very eager to inform the Riverside family about a project I am currently working on with the entire K-12 School Counseling Department of Princeton Regional Schools. In order to bolster our bullying prevention efforts across the district, we are currently developing "PRS United Against Bullying," a comprehensive website for students, staff and parents, featuring strategies, resources, articles and videos geared towards addressing this ever-growing issue. I have personally worked tirelessly on the design and formatting of this website and my colleagues in the PRS School Counseling Department have been instrumental in compiling the mountains of data and resources necessary to make a site like "PRS United" thrive. We are nearing completion and the site should be ready to launch in the spring. I hope everyone finds it helpful and informative.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress. In the past, I have organized small groups based on parent requests and I am always willing to do so. If there are enough students to participate in a particular group, I am always ready and excited to do it. I would love to hear from you!

*Sincerely,*

*Ben Samara  
Riverside School Counselor*



Index card towers made by 5<sup>th</sup> graders during a January lesson on teamwork and cooperation

## Ken Northridge

In Ken Northridge's Character Education Magic Show, "amazing magic is used to teach young people about what it means to have character and why having character is so important to becoming successful. The routine is based on the six pillars of character education (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Fairness, and Citizenship). Lessons include: Conflict resolution, the consequences of choices, choosing friends wisely, there is more to people than meets the eye, persistence, positive thinking, and more. Mr. Northridge will be appearing at Riverside on February 15!!



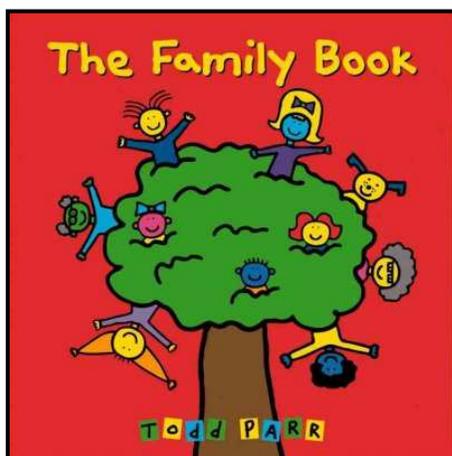
## Books of the Month

**The Family Book by Todd Parr**

**It's OK to Be Different by Todd Parr**

Todd Parr has written dozens of successful children's books. The ones listed above are two of my favorites. The kids love his humor and quirky illustrations, while I love his ability to get a powerful message across in a simple way. Whenever I pull out one of these books during a lesson in grades Pre-K to 1, the students are always wowed. You can find more information on Todd and his books at:

<http://www.toddpar.com/>



## Helpful Websites

### Stress Free Kids

<http://www.stressfreekids.com>

Lori Lite, founder of Stress Free Kids, advertises many of her books and videos on this website. Surprisingly, there is a wealth of free and very useful information and articles on how to help children manage stress in their lives.

### PEI Kids

<http://www.peikids.org>

The website for PEI Kids, the organization that runs yearly Child Assault Prevention (CAP) workshops in Kindergarten and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade at Riverside. There is information about the CAP program as well as a section with tips for parents.

### Stop Cyberbullying

<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org>

A website with strategies and resources to help parents deal with the increasing issue of cyberbullying at home and in schools.

## Important Dates

### February 7 - 11

National School Counseling Week!

### March 15-16 & 22-23

Riverside Parent Conferences

### April 15 - 25

Spring Recess

### May 9 - 13

NJASK Testing (Grades 3-5)

## 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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