



Riverside School
Princeton, NJ

Winter 2011-2012
Volume 3, Issue 2

Riverside School Counseling Newsletter

What's New?

As always, the school year is flying by and the holidays are fast approaching. During the month of October, we celebrated New Jersey's Week of Respect and School Violence Awareness Week.

During the Week of Respect, I visited each classroom to talk about the word respect and its meaning. Students participated in classroom discussions and activities designed to highlight this important topic.

In celebration of School Violence Awareness Week, students and staff participated in theme days designed to raise awareness for bullying-prevention, tolerance, and conflict resolution. Students were also treated to many great presentations and classroom lessons on these topics. Thank you to students, staff and parents for making this week such a success.

With those two important weeks behind us, it's now time to look forward to the many wonderful things we have in store for the remainder of the year!

Please keep in mind that I run numerous student groups throughout the year based on specific needs, as expressed by teachers and/or parents. If you feel your child would benefit from a particular group or have a suggestion for a group topic, please let me know.

Finally, as testing season begins to approach, please let me know if you feel your child could use some additional help with stress, study skills or other related areas.

Wishing the entire Riverside family a safe holiday season and a happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Ben Samara
Riverside School Counselor

SVAW Wrap-Up

We had several great presenters come in for School Violence Awareness Week in October. I've listed each presenter below with a brief description:

Tuesday, October 18

Generation Text and founder Jill Brown joined us for a discussion with 4th and 5th graders about cyberbullying and technology safety.

Wednesday, October 19

Our fourth grade classes took their yearly trip to Kidsbridge Museum of Tolerance on the campus of TCNJ. In small groups with classmates, teachers and volunteer facilitators, the children participated in interactive and thought-provoking exhibits to explore the fundamentals of prejudice, discrimination, racism, name-calling, stereotypes, empathy-building, bystander behavior, exclusion, self-esteem, and sensitivity to people with disabilities.

Friday, October 21

We welcomed the Corner House group "Growing Up Accepted as an Individual in America" (GAIA) into our second grade classrooms. GAIA uses fun activities to promote acceptance and understanding of all individuals.

Also on Friday, October 21

Fifth graders received a visit from Officer Matt Solovay of the Princeton Township Police Department. He gave a lecture on bullying and cyberbullying.

In addition to these informative speakers, each K-5 class received a lesson from Mr. Samara.

Do you have suggestions for presenter or speaker topics for next year's School Violence Awareness Week? I'm always looking for ways to increase and enhance the opportunities offered to the students at Riverside. Please let me know your thoughts!

What is a 504 Plan?

As Riverside's school counselor, I am the coordinator of all 504 plans. These plans provide formalized accommodations, both in the classroom and during standardized testing, to students who have a disability or condition that impacts their learning. **504 plans are not the same as an IEP or classification and are not part of the Child Study Team process.**

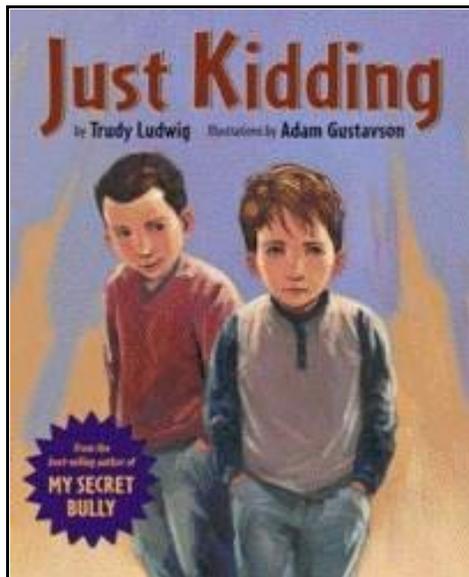
Often, a student is tested with the Child Study Team for classification but does not qualify. If they have a disability or condition that significantly impacts their learning, they may be eligible for a 504 plan.

If you would like more information on the 504 process, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Books of the Month

Just Kidding **by Trudy Ludwig**

A joke that has a sharp edge to it can cut you to pieces. That's what D.J. finds out from his encounters with Vince, a smart-aleck classmate whose biting humor is more hurtful than funny. With the help of his dad and teacher, D.J. learns how to stand up to put downs and make healthier friendship choices.



Helpful Websites

The Fun Works

<http://thefunworks.edc.org>

A great site that teaches children about the many different careers they can have when they get older. Fun and interactive.

Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Mercer County

<http://www.bbbsmercer.org>

RS has a strong relationship with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Mercer County. We have matched several students over the past few years. Think your child would benefit from a Big Brother or Big Sister? Check out the website or contact me for more info!

PRS United

<http://www.prsunited.com>

The School Counselors of Princeton Regional Schools put together this is the anti-bullying website as a resource for students, staff and parents. Please take a look and give feedback as to how we can improve it!!

Important Dates

December 24-January 2

Winter Recess

January 13 - 16

No School

February 17-20

No School

March 13-14 & 20-21

Riverside Parent Conferences

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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