



Riverside School
Princeton, NJ

Winter 2013-2014
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Riverside School Counseling Newsletter

What's New?

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving break. We have a short month of December until we are off again, but still so much going on!

The word "upstander" is spreading like wildfire! See the story to the right for more information.

We've just completed our Kindergarten friendship and games group and we are currently in the final few weeks of the second grade social problem solving group. In January, the fifth graders who signed up for social problem solving will begin their group, with groups for first, third and fourth grade coming in the spring. As always, if you think your child would benefit from small group work, please let me know.

Round two of "lunch bunch" will also begin this month. Ask your child if they are going!

As a school, Riverside is working hard to promote kindness and compassion. On my new bulletin board you will notice the quote "Kindness, like a boomerang, always returns," with a boomerang for each class explaining what kindness means to them.

Recently, I came across an old Aesop quote I remembered hearing during my elementary school days. It said: "Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you."

It's a simple quote, but a powerful one. And it's a concept we hope resonates with our students here at Riverside.

Sincerely,
Ben Samara
Riverside School Counselor

The "Upstander" Concept

Over the past few weeks, we've begun to introduce the concept of the "upstander" school-wide. This is a word I've used with the third, fourth and fifth graders for years. It's a play on the term "bystander," which means a person who stands by and does nothing to help while a negative situation is occurring. Usually, the term is used to describe the onlookers in a bullying situation. An "upstander" would be someone who stands up for what is right and helps the victim.

No one knows exactly where the term "upstander" originated, but I became familiar with it through the work of Naomi Drew, who's workbook "No Kidding About Bullying" has been essential to me here at Riverside. The word is also the backbone of our yearly fourth grade field trip to the Kidsbridge Museum of Tolerance.

This year, we decided it would be a great idea to take the "upstander" concept school-wide, while also expanding the definition of the word to other areas. If you can be an "upstander" in a bullying situation, why can't you be an "upstander" for your school by keeping the bathrooms clean or for a friend who is sad by doing something kind for them?

By expanding the definition of the word and making it our own, we're hoping to foster a unique and supportive "upstander" culture at Riverside. We've begun airing videos on KBC explaining the word and in the future you'll begin to see "upstander" posters around Riverside in different areas. On the posters will be a simple reminder for all of us, which reflects the expanded scope of the word: "Upstanders respect the rights, feelings and property of others."



QUICK TIPS

Seven quick tips to boost kids' confidence:

Adapted from
TheKidCounselor.com

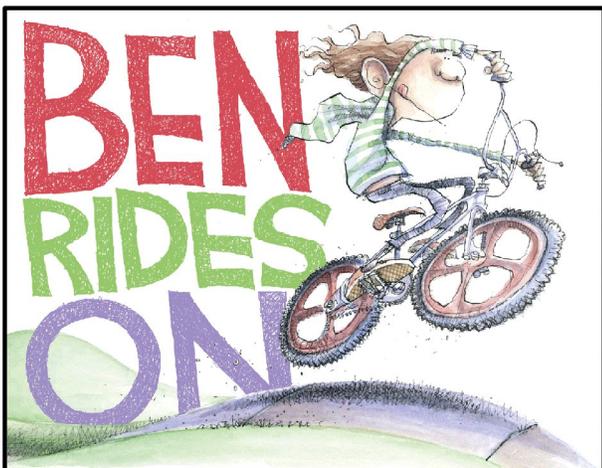
- Encourage Interests
- Demonstrate Respect
- Teach New Skills
- Be Involved
- Demonstrate Self Esteem

Book of the Month

Ben Rides On
by Matt Davies

"Ben loves his new bike. In fact, he loves it so much he even likes riding to school (especially if he can take the long way around)! That is, until an encounter with the local bully, Adrian Underbite, leaves Ben bike-less. When Ben discovers where his bike actually is, the reader is in for a dramatic, and literal, cliffhanger."

This is a great book about compassion and the power of a kind act.
Recommended for grades 1-3.



Helpful Websites

CharacterEd.net Parent Portal

<http://charactered.net/parent>

The parent section of CharacterEd.net, featuring articles designed to help parents foster character in their children. Content includes tips for character building at home, quizzes, resource lists and more.

KidsTube

<http://www.KidsTube.com>

Like YouTube, but for kids. Which means it lacks the inappropriate videos and the comments that come with them. When visiting, kids select their age range: 3+, 6+ or 10+.

Found a great website you'd like Mr. Samara to know about? Please e-mail me at:
ben_samara@princetonk12.org

Important Dates

December 21-January 1

Winter Recess

February 3-7

National School Counselor Week!

March 4-5 & 11-12

Riverside Parent Conferences

March 15-March 23

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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