



Oak Tree Elementary School

The Monroe Public Schools, in collaboration with the members of the community, shall ensure that all students receive an exemplary education by well-trained, committed staff, in a safe and orderly environment.

Principal's Newsletter February 2021

Dear Oak Tree Families,

Want to spend quality time with your child. Build his or her reading skills, and help him or her learn to love books? Well, you can do all three when you read aloud together. Here are some suggestions.

Read regularly, aim for 10-15 minutes of bedtime reading for a peaceful end to a busy day. Bring along a book while waiting for an appointment or during a sibling's sport practice. Curl up together with a book when you are finished working for the day and dinner is cooking. Take turns choosing books. And while your child may want to hear their favorite over and over again, use your turn to try new title and different genres.

Have your child participate while you read. They can turn the pages, or finish sentences that rhyme or even fill in words they can read. Go slowly so there is time to understand the story and look at the illustrations. But do not forget to be playful too! Use different voices for different characters, or substitute family names for a character's name. Remember February 3 is World Read Aloud Day so it is a perfect week to begin!

Kudos to our school for already raising over \$3500 for the Leukemia Lymphoma Society Pennies for Patients program. Having a virtual fundraiser is a challenge but our third grade Student Council members accepted it by creating virtual posters and videos to generate support for this important school endeavor. Last year we were one of the top ten fundraising schools in the state!

Stay warm and Happy Valentine's Day!

Kindest regards,

Patty Dinsmore

Patricia J. Dinsmore
Principal

A WORD FROM MRS. AMENDOLA.....

This month we will focus our character education instruction on the value of **friendship**. You can support our lessons at home by discussing the character values with your children, modeling the values, and reading books with your child.

February's character value is friendship. Before reading some of the books listed below, have a conversation with your child about friendships and what it means to be a friend. This will support the discussions and lessons we teach here at Oak Tree. Below are some books that you can read with your child, which have themes related to the character trait:

- **Enemy Pie** by Derek Munson
- **Do Unto Otters** by Laurie Keller
- **The Potato Chip Champ** by Maria Dismody
- **The Giving Tree** by Shel Silverstein
- **How the Crayons Saved the Rainbow** by Monica Sweeney
- **Love from the Crayons** by Drew Daywalt
- **The Magic of Friendship Snow** by Andi Cann

Web Resources

There are so many wonderful educational websites and applications for mobile devices available for you to download and use. You may have some favorites that your children love to use, or maybe you are stuck with where to start. Below are some resources for you to try this month:

Language Art

Learn Sight Words – For iOS devices

- <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/learn-sight-words/id341456761>
- - Kids can use this app to practice sight words in a flash card format. You have the ability to flag difficult words for the child to continue to practice.
- **ukloo – For mobile devices**
- *iTunes:* <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/id672310847?ign-mpt=uo%3D4>
- *Google Play Store:* <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.SGS.uKloo>
- - *uKloo* is based on a board game of the same name. Kids choose a scene and then read written clues.
- **Bookly – For mobile devices** <https://getbookly.com/> - Bookly helps you track your reading in real-time, manage your books, make a habit out of reading and see your progress over time.

Mathematics

Math Kids – Add, Subtract, Count – For mobile devices

iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/math-kids-add-subtract-count/id1272098657?mt=8>

Google Play:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.rvappstudios.math.kids.counting&hl=en_US

- Math Kids is a free learning game designed to teach young children numbers and mathematics. It features several mini-games that toddlers and pre-K kids will love to play, and the more they do the better their math skills will become! Math Kids will help preschoolers, kindergarteners, 1st graders to learn to identify numbers and start training with addition and subtraction puzzles.

Dragon Box – For mobile devices <http://dragonbox.com/>

- These puzzle-game apps are designed to secretly teach math, algebra and geometry. Kids move through 200 levels without ever realizing they are doing math. Using pictures instead of numbers, kids learn basic algebraic concepts, such as making two sides equal. The puzzles get trickier as you move through the levels

STEM

ScratchJr <http://www.scratchjr.org/> - ScratchJr is an introductory programming language that enables young children (ages 5-7) to create their own interactive stories and games. Children snap together graphical programming blocks to make characters move, jump, dance, and sing

SimpleRockets – For mobile devices

- *iTunes:* <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/simplerockets/id663068211?mt=8>
- *Google Play Store:*
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.jundroo.simplerockets&hl=en>
- - Design your own rocket ships. Blast off into space. Explore the solar system. See if you have what it takes to be a rocket scientist.
- **General**
- **IXL – Website and app** <https://www.ixl.com/>
- - IXL is appropriate for Pre-K through grade 12. Children earn simple online prize pictures for completing milestones. Each skill adjusts to your child's level – if you get enough problems right, it skips to the end, but if you get some wrong you have to do more.
- **Dance Mat Typing**
- <https://primarygamesarena.com/Play/Dance-Mat-Typing-2012>
Meet the gang and learn to type. Make your way through all 12 stages and you can be a top typist.
- **Sheppard Software** <http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/>
- Hundreds of educational games, activities, quizzes, articles and more for kids.
- **Cookie** <http://www.cookie.com/> - While playing fun educational games, kids learn to read with phonics, build skills in math, language, social studies, science and much more.

Many of our teachers have wonderful web resources posted on their class webpages as well. Be sure to check out the webpage of your child's teacher!



CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held on February 17 and 18. More information will be coming home. The portal to sign up opened on January 29 and will close on February 11.

Give Kids a Smile Month

The New Jersey Dental Association sponsors the Annual Give Kids a Smile Month in February. The Give Kids a Smile Month is February 1 through 28, 2021. All children in New Jersey who do not have dental insurance are eligible for a free dental exam and care this month. The dental exams are by appointment only. The Give Kids a Smile Month website is www.njda.org/gkas and all information about locations and appointments can be found at this site. Appointments book very quickly so please do not wait to make an appointment. All children must have a signed parental consent form to be seen by the dentist.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR SCHOOL NURSE, MRS. MCNUTT

February is Heart Health month and it is never too early to start your children with heart healthy habits. Daily exercise and a healthy diet are essential for a life time of heart health. Some fun things for your family to try that are also heart healthy are:

- Playing out in the snow, making a snowman or snow fort
- Ice skating or roller skating
- Bundle up and take a family walk in the snow or just be outside on a brisk winter day
- Try fun family recipes and make meal time family time. Your children can help by washing vegetables, setting the table or picking a menu.
- Homemade pizzas are fun and children can put many colorful vegetables on their pizza like peppers, tomatoes or olives.
- Many fruits are in season in the winter and a fun winter fruit salad with apples, oranges and bananas is a heart healthy treat for snack, dessert or breakfast.



SCHOOL LIBRARY

Our Book Circulation program is back in full swing. Students in any grade at Oak Tree School can "Hold" a book through our Destiny Discover Website. The book can then always be picked up the following Thursday from 1:30-3:30 pm at the front door of our school. Please see Class Dojo, our Media Center website, or your child's Google Classroom page for more information in you are interested in this program.



Did you know we have a media enrichment hour each Tuesday at 2:45? This hour is open currently to 2nd grade students. Our last semester will then be open to 3rd grade students. This is not required and is for students who actively want to code and/or create online.

Looking for digital books to read at home? Don't forget you have access to Epic, MackinVia, Bookflix, Tumblebooks, and Truflix! Email me anytime if you need help with a username or password.

Email: john.gleason@monroe.k12.nj.us

Our media center website is updated weekly: <https://www.monroe.k12.nj.us/Domain/932>

DATES TO REMEMBER:

February

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| 1 | Hybrid Students Return |
| 4 | Falcon Leadership Virtual Recognition |
| 11 | Conference Portal Closes for Parents |
| 12 | Half Day In-Service/4 Hour Session |
| 15 | School Closed |
| 16 | Jump Rope for Heart Kick Off |
| 17 | Conferences/Evening/4 Hour Session Board of Education Meeting |
| 18 | Conferences/4 Hour Session |
| 19 | 4 Hour Session |

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

During the month of February we will be focusing on the value of "friendship". For our students, we define friendship as "showing someone that you care about them by being kind, spending time, and sharing." During our guidance lessons this month students will learn about the importance of friendship, how to be a kind friend, and how to solve disagreements with friends. Students will continue to have the opportunity to earn Rising Stars Dojo Points throughout the day when they display exemplary behavior related to the value of friendship, or any previously learned "Word of the Month". Our Mindful Practice for February is Mindful Seeing. Mindful Seeing means paying attention to what we see. We can notice details of things which we may not have noticed before. This practice is a great way to relax. It also helps us notice how others may be feeling



(by observing facial expressions and moods) – so we know how to be a good friend to them. We are excited to see our students demonstrate kindness to one another. Please continue to join us in showing our enthusiasm for your children’s dedication towards learning and displaying these important values each month. Have a wonderful and friendly month!

STUDENT COUNCIL

We hope you had a wonderful Winter Break! Before our break, we really took the time to show our love and appreciation for the important people in our lives through our Holiday Cheer Cards! Student Council members took the time to create card templates, so students and staff could use them to write messages to a loved one. This year these messages meant so much more than just kind words because we have not been able to see each other or really show appreciation during this crazy year. Thank you to all those who participated and shared cards with one another! We also wanted to thank everyone for continuing to donate to the LLS Society! We continue to raise a wonderful amount that the society is very appreciative of.

Student Council will be back with new events coming soon!



JUMP ROPE FOR HEART

We are thrilled to announce that Oak Tree will be participating in the American Heart Association’s Jump Rope for Heart Program with a kick off on February 16. The Jump Rope for Heart event will take place the week of March 15th. All fundraising will be online. Please feel free to contact Mr. Boukema and Mr. Kendall with any questions.



ATTENDANCE AND PLANNED EXTENDED ABSENCE POLICY

Regular attendance is a requisite for success in school. New Jersey law requires that students attend school regularly and it is the parent's responsibility to insure that their child attends school. Please stress the importance of daily school attendance to your child. There are times throughout the school year when families may find it necessary to take their children out of school for an extended period of time. Our Board Policy addresses the criteria that should be followed should this occur. If you will be taking your child out of school for an extended period of time (11 days or more), kindly provide a letter from the parent/guardian to the school addressing the number of days and dates the child will be missing school. **Policy states the student will be dis-enrolled during this absence period. No homework or make-up tests will be provided. Upon returning to school, the parent/guardian will be responsible for re-registering the child.** Contact Cherie McCoy at Central Registration – 609-642-6128, extension 4013.

FALCON LEADERSHIP AWARD

Congratulations to our December winners of the Falcon Leadership Award!

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| K | Kavya Ramesh |
| 1 | Moksha Devarapalli |
| 2 | Prisha Vyas |
| 3 | Simran Arya |



CHESS SPARKS WINNER!

Congratulations to second grader Samanyu Thandra from Oak Tree who participated in the 8-week Chess Sparks virtual program. The program culminated in practice games and then a final chess tournament. Applegarth School was the winning school in the tournament, which included participants from several states! We are so proud of all of the participants.

SUNDAY

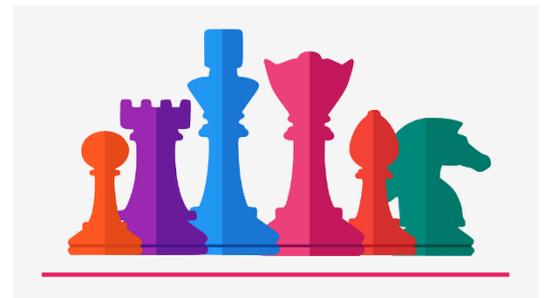
1st - Samanyu Thandra (Grade 2, Oak Tree)
2nd - Kiaan Vaishnav (Grade 4, Applegarth)
3rd - Sarayu Thandra (Grade 4, Applegarth)

TUESDAY

1st - Samanyu Thandra (Grade 2, Oak Tree)
2nd - Sarayu Thandra (Grade 4, Applegarth)
3rd – Diya K (Grade 5, Applegarth)

THURSDAY

1st - Kiaan Vaishnav (Grade 4, Applegarth)
2nd - Samanyu Thandra (Grade 2, Oak Tree)
3rd - Sarayu Thandra (Grade 4, Applegarth)





Dear Parents,

Here are a few ways to inspire reading and writing at home this month.

- Get creative for Valentine's Day! Help your child to write their own cards to family and friends. Together, look for clip art on the computer to design your own card. Then either write a special note or show your child how to type their message. You can even practice reading recipes to make a delicious Valentine's day snack.
- Read the story "Dragons Love Tacos" by Adam Rubin. When a little boy discovers that dragons like to eat tacos, he decides to host a taco party for them. Look out though- make sure you don't serve spicy salsa with those tacos! Help your child to make a Text to Self Connection: Even though the little boy's dragon party turned into a disaster due to spicy salsa, he tried to show he cared by throwing the party for them. How can you show people you care about them? What could you do?

Make Friday and Saturday nights "Camp Night" at your house. Build a "tent" with blankets, couch cushions and pillows. Then climb inside your tent and read with a flashlight.

- Get the whole family together to listen to some of your favorite stories. I've done this a bunch of times with my children and it's one of their favorite activities! Don't forget the popcorn so you can share a snack with your stories!

Happy Reading,
Mrs. Kappus
Oak Tree's Reading Specialist





HAPPY
VALENTINE'S
DAY