



# 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 December 2023

Dear Oak Tree Families,

As the holiday season quickly approaches and we scurry to buy gifts for friends and family, it is often difficult to make time to remember others who may be less fortunate. Once again, this year Oak Tree School decided to give back in some very special ways. Our Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive brought in hundreds of canned and boxed food items that were distributed to local Oak Tree families in need. Students even donated their time to sort the food and box it! In December we will also conduct our Annual Holiday Gift Drive. Gifts will be donated and delivered to local Monroe families. So, as you can see, we have been very busy at Oak Tree School thinking of others and showing compassion for those less fortunate. Our staff and students are committed to demonstrating respect, kindness, and generosity. It is also an integral part of our SEL (Social Emotional Learning) focus.

Another one of Oak Tree's goals is to have each of our students learn the foundations of the different subject areas and transition toward meaningful applications. So, move over Macy's!! STEM projects in third grade resulted in a beautiful display of Thanksgiving Day Parade balloons. Students learned about Native Americans and their contributions to our history. And don't forget the many innovative creations to keep our turkeys safe and hidden!

On behalf of the Oak Tree staff, I want to wish you a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year!

Kindest regards,

*Patty Dinsmore*

Patricia J. Dinsmore

[patricia.dinsmore@monroe.k12.nj.us](mailto:patricia.dinsmore@monroe.k12.nj.us)

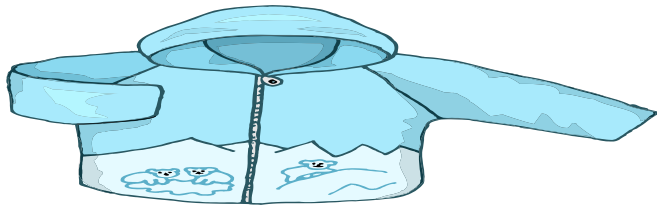


### **REPORT CARDS**

Parents will have on-line access to report cards on December 21.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

With winter approaching, the weather is quickly changing. Whenever possible, students will be going outside for recess. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for this activity, as the temperatures drop. Please be sure all jackets and outside apparel are marked clearly with their name. Thank you for your cooperation!



### **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- |    |                                    |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 1  | Holiday Shop                       |
| 6  | Grade 3 Coding Day                 |
| 8  | Celebration Day/Movie Day          |
| 11 | Holiday Socks Day                  |
| 13 | Holiday Slippers Day               |
| 14 | Falcon Leadership Ceremony         |
| 15 | Flannel Day                        |
|    | RAE's Rewards                      |
| 19 | Ugly Holiday Sweater/Outfit Day    |
| 21 | Parent Access to Report Cards      |
| 22 | 4 Hour Session/Winter Break Begins |
|    | PTA Snack Sale                     |





## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR SCHOOL NURSE, MRS. MC NUTT**

### **Thanksgiving Food Drive**

Thanks to Ms. Guerrero, the Oak Tree Student Council and the Monroe Township Office on Aging for their help and hard work with the Thanksgiving Food Drive. Thanks to their efforts many families had a bountiful holiday feast. Thanks also to our Oak Tree Students and their families for their generous donations for the food drive.

### **Cold and Flu Season**

As we approach the winter cold and flu season, here are a few tips to help keep your family healthy:

- The flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older.
- Caregivers of children with health conditions and of children younger than 6 months should be vaccinated.
- People with influenza may be able to infect others by shedding the virus from 1 day prior to getting sick until 5 to 7 days after, especially if they still have symptoms.
- Keep your child home when they are sick. Children should be fever free for 24 hours without Tylenol or Motrin before returning to school. Fever is defined as 100F or higher.
- Cover coughs and sneezes and throw tissues away after use.
- Regular hand washing.
- Avoid touching eyes, the nose and the mouth to reduce the spread of germs.
- If someone in the household is ill, try to keep them in a separate room if possible.
- If your child is ill, be sure to encourage fluids, encourage plenty of rest and contact your doctor.

### **Proper Rest for School Aged Children**

In addition to a healthy diet and exercise, adequate sleep is vital for children's health. Many children today do not receive adequate sleep and come to school very tired. It is very difficult for children who are tired to function well during the school day. It is important to maintain a routine sleep schedule to ensure proper sleep for preschool and school aged children. Some things to consider are:

- Set a consistent bedtime every night with a routine in place (warm drink, bath, book) and stick to this routine as much as possible
- Dark, quiet room or small night light

- No televisions or electronics in the bedroom
- Children sleep in their own bed
- Avoid caffeinated drinks in the evening
- Children aged 3 to 5 years require 11-13 hours of sleep per night
- Children aged 6 to 13 years require 9-11 hours of sleep per night
- Source, National Sleep Foundation

### **RIDE WITH CHARACTER**



Congratulations to Bus 2 for being awarded November's Bus of the Month as part of our positive behavior bus incentive program, which ties directly to our Rising Stars program. Each Oak Tree student received a certificate of recognition and two star tickets. We are so proud of them!!!

### **CONGRATULATIONS FALCON LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS**

#### **November**

- K Eshaan Pitani
- 1 Anvi Timmapuram
- 2 Jonael Mascote
- 3 Shivani Adhimoolam



### **NO GLASS CONTAINERS**

Just a reminder to not send any type of glass containers with your child to school for snack or lunch. It is extremely dangerous if an item were to shatter and/or break. Thank you.



### Reading and Writing Through the Holidays!

With the holidays right around the corner, here are some ways to incorporate reading and writing into your family traditions!

~ Think about gifts you can give your child that would encourage writing. Here are a few you might consider:

- special pens and pencils
- pads of paper
- diaries or journals
- envelopes
- a new calendar



~ You can put writing prompts into fun family games, like “Would You Rather?” Then each person can share what they wrote. Here are some examples:

- Would you rather have a polar bear or a penguin as a pet? Why?
- Would you rather live in an igloo or a log cabin?
- Would you rather eat holiday cookies for breakfast each day or red and green M&Ms?
- Would you rather meet Santa or Frosty the Snowman?

~ Try a reading challenge! Who can read the most minutes, the silliest book, or the spookiest book over winter break? Kids can create a festive place to read that’s just for them with pillows and lights...don’t forget a snack!

~ Here are some fun winter books to get you started. Make sure to check out Monroe’s Library or the Bookmobile to gather some books to read over winter break!

- The Wild Christmas Reindeer by Jan Brett
- Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Sleigh by Mo Willems
- Memoirs of an Elf by Devin Scillian
- Light the Lights by Margaret Moorman
- The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg

Wishing everyone a safe holiday season,

Mrs. Kappus



# Winter Break

## WINTER RECESS

Schools will be closed for winter recess from December 25 to January 1. There will also be a four session on December 22. Have a safe and relaxing break.



## STUDENT COUNCIL NEWS

THANK YOU for another successful food drive at Oak Tree! We have truly gone above and beyond for these local families, and they are so appreciative of all that we donate. The winning grade for the food drive contest is...**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade!** This year they have donated the most food and will be able to have a movie and pajama day sometime this month! Again, thank you for all your donations!!!!

Oak Tree Student Council will also be sponsoring a holiday gift drive during the earlier part of December. Students and staff are encouraged to bring in ***new, unwrapped*** gifts for families and children in need, within our community. Gifts will be collected and given to local families in Monroe Township. The gift drive is a great way to spread holiday joy and help others who are less fortunate during the holiday season. We look forward to yet another successful holiday drive! Look out for more info to come! Thank you so much in advance for your support and generosity!



Our word of the month for December is “compassion.” We define compassion as “showing others that we care about them and doing things to help others feel happy.” We have many opportunities to practice this value here in school. We tell students that it is most often the “little things” that we can do to show others that we care. Using our manners, giving compliments, noticing when others need help, saying cheerful things, etc. all go a long way to make someone’s day. During our guidance lessons this month, we will be reinforcing this value of compassion and emphasizing that when we help others, we are helping ourselves as well. Students will be able to send each other “Compassion Cards” through our mailbox system this month to show each other how we care. Our Mindful Practice for December is “Heartfulness”. This means sending kind thoughts to others. We practice this by saying “May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be safe. May you be strong.” This is a positive way to start our day and think kindly of others. Our students continue to work together to earn star tickets for practicing all their pro-social behaviors, and we will be thrilled to reward them with another “celebration day” when we achieve our next goal. Have a happy and healthy December!



### **HOMEWORK REQUEST**

With the flu and cold season come students' absences. We are happy to comply with requests for homework and classwork when your child will be absent for three days or more because of illness. It does take time to collect materials and assignments so if you wish to request homework to be sent home, please call the school office prior to 10 am. In cases of shorter absences, our first concern is for the health of your child and getting the proper rest and care, not homework being completed.

