



# THE HAWKS NEST

November 2019

VALLEY RIDGE ACADEMY

## Letter from our Principal

**P**arents, Guardians and Hawks,

The 2019-2020 PTO Fun Run was a tremendous success on every level! Thanks to the amazing efforts by the students at the school, VRA was able to blow past our fundraising goal of \$40,000. All the funds raised go back to initiatives that directly benefit the students of the school such as the multi-year goal of installing a shade structure for the outdoor basketball courts. I could not be prouder of the students, teachers and staff, and the community at large for embracing the Fun Run and working together to have such a positive impact on the school. The Fun Run would not have been possible if not for the incredible effort by Ms. Melanie Armour and the PTO for organizing and running the day to day operations. The work of the PTO volunteers allows the teachers to keep their focus on rigorous instruction and minimize any disruptions to the learning environment. Thank you also to all the parents and volunteers who came out on Friday to help mark laps, hand out water, throw color and cheer on the students! We truly could not be the school we are without your support.

As many of our community members know, this year marks the 150-year celebration of St. Johns County School District. The St. Johns County School Board and District Superintendent Tim Forson invite you to join them to celebrate 150 Years of Excellence in Education on Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. A welcome social will begin at 8:00 am at the St Johns County School District building at 40 Orange Street in St. Augustine followed by the official 150-year proclamation at 8:30 am.



# THE HAWKS NEST

November 2019

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## Letter from our Principal (cont.)

**W**ould you like to make your holiday shopping a little easier and more convenient? Then mark your calendars for the PTO Winter Wonderland Shoppe on December 3<sup>rd</sup> - December 12<sup>th</sup>. Similar to the Book Fair, classes will sign up for times to go to the Shoppe with more information to be sent home from your child's teacher.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. I hope that you use the short break to refresh, recharge and can spend quality time with family and loved ones. If you are planning to travel, please do so safely and I look forward to seeing everyone back ready for the final December push!

Go Hawks!

*Sandra McMandon*

# Character Counts! Celebrations

**A**s part of VRA's Character Counts! Program one pillar of character is featured every month. During the month of October VRA highlighted the pillar of **RESPONSIBILITY**



Teachers and students discussed the meaning of this important value:

**Do what you are supposed to do \* Plan ahead \* Persevere: keep on trying! \* Always do your best \* Use self-control \* Be self-disciplined \* Think before you act – consider the consequences \* Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes \* Set a good example for others**

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, VRA was proud to celebrate elementary students nominated by their teachers for exemplifying the virtue of **RESPONSIBILITY**

*Congratulations to our awesome students!*



**Kindergarten** - Carson Stark (Absent from Fairness Celebration), Cali Meunier, Serena Parajuli, Elias Crabbe, Mariana Pagan Ortiz, Makenzie Larsen, Savannah Fila, Beckett Nover, Collin Smith



**First Grade** – Brooklyn Deuter, Kaleb Fanning, John Garro, Avery Price, Scarlett Tabeling, Riley Willis, Kayla Maldonado, Brooke Dorrow, Ava Nozzilillo



**Second Grade** – Coco Norris, Kendal Anderson, William Sadlo, Jiya Chainani, Amelia Kosho, Sophia Naranjo, Alexandria Carlson, Mae Harry



# Character Counts! Celebrations



**Third Grade** - Daisha Gibbs, Gyan Patel, Lucy Davis, Helena Wurtz, Chloe Armour, Brody Holgrimson, Brooke Simoneau, Hudson Gunning (Absent).



**Fourth Grade** - Sophia Muenchen, Joshua Noboa, Nishka Chauhan, Mihika Chauhan, Eli Trinidad, Adriana Vargas, Kacie Minx



**Fifth Grade** - Louisa Iiao, Trevor Ruiz, Reed Shearon, Nicholas Donlan, Isabella Keller, Ella Dunn, Sydney Dickerson

The Middle School celebration for Character Counts! **RESPONSIBILITY** took place at VRA on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

*Well done, Middle Schoolers!  
We are proud of you!*



**Sixth Grade** – Lucy Krum, Giselle DiNenna, Dylan Rhoad, Alannah Bertram, Sydney Minx, Nathan Alounevong

**Seventh Grade** – Sarah Yeoman, Elliot Lim, Christine Lowry, Graydon Gunning, Marlana Smith

**Eighth Grade** - Sajan Gajarawala, Cole Berman, Ally Lu, Aurelienne Love, Kiyah Kolbow, Alanah Curtis, PJ Gray



# VRA Celebrates Veterans Day

In honor of Veteran's Day, the Rotary Early Act Service Club and the Voices of the Valley Ridge Chorus went to the Clyde Lassen State Veteran's Nursing Home. They presented a program

with songs to thank the veterans for their service. The school made posters, letters, cards, and picture frames that were given to the veterans too.



## VRA Spelling Bee

For the first time SJCS D has invited its K-8 schools to send both an elementary and a middle school representative to participate in the District-wide Spelling Bee.

Valley Ridge Academy held its Spelling Bee on November 6<sup>th</sup>.



During this event, **Ishaan Rao** (5<sup>th</sup> Grade) and **Sofie Nguyen** (8<sup>th</sup> Grade) earned first place.

These two amazing students will represent all Hawks at the District Spelling Bee on December 4<sup>th</sup>, where they will compete with up to 45 other spelling champions.



# Teacher Awards



Congratulations to Kimberley Bostic, VRA 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and team lead, for being St. John's County Elementary Social Studies Teacher of the Year! Her amazing honor was awarded during the Florida Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference.

Pictured above with Ms. Bostic is the new president of the Florida Council for the Social Studies (FCSS) board, Peggy Renihan.

# Red Ribbon Week

The counseling department at VRA wants to thank all those that made this week a success!

Between the assemblies, K-4 prevention lessons, themed days, visual reminders, and student pledges, VRA students had fun while learning important information.



# NJHS Diaper Drive



NJHS held a diaper drive in October to collect new diapers for Hubbard House, a local shelter for victims of domestic violence. NJHS officers counted the diapers and thanks to our generous parents and students, 2,500 diapers were collected! The diapers will be delivered to Hubbard House right as the holiday season approaches. Mrs. Weiss, Mrs. Bostic, and all NJHS members want to thank everyone who donated. Pictured left to right are NJHS officers Emily, Nate, Peter, Aiden, and Kayla.



# Red Ribbon Week (cont)

As part of Red Ribbon Week, VRA families spent some quality time together and away from screens. Everyone had a blast while strengthening family bonds. Below are some of the activities they chose to enjoy.



KINDER		FIRST		SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	FIFTH	MIDDLE SCHOOL
B-day @ beach & Blue Angels	Visit to neighborhood park	Played at the park and had a B-B-Q	Headbanz and Root Bear Floats	Family dinner time and Bible reading	Family trip – high school football	Halloween carnival bounce house	Board games and spelling practice	Trampoline, park, go-karts
Dinner together at home	Assembled new furniture together	Family scavenger hunt	Checker, Chess, and Scrabble	Noctoberfest & listening to music	Family Scooter/bike ride	Bike riding, soccer and football		
Laser Tag and lightsaber battles	Quiet family time in the mornings	Target candy event	Family reunion-Tug of War	Golf cart ride and reading books	Planted a lemon tree and flowers	Assembled Ping-Pong table	Mass and board games	
Amazing Grace Farm-corn maze	Family dinner at Memphis Jax	Attended music festival	Pumpkin carving	Family house cleaning day	Sea shells at the beach	Card game and catapult		
		Pumpkin Patch Festival	Pelican Snowball	Games in the morning	Decorated pumpkin	Beach swimming		
Family trip to the mountains	Family house cleaning event	Went to soccer game	Air Show at the beach	Went on the boat	Rock wall climbing	Dogs to the beach	Reading favorite books	Daytona family trip
		Three marker challenge	Played tag at the park	Played with chalk outside	Tag and Hide-n-Seek	Catch and the park /B-B-Q		
Pumpkin carving	Family created game	Celebrated Diwali	Read books together	Target candy event	Carved pumpkins	Carved pumpkin		
		Rice Krispy Treats	Spent time together	Amazing Grace Maze	Corn maze and fun games	Volleyball game		
Family basketball	Build little skateboards	Played Penny Parachuter	Uno and Flag Football	Went to the beach	Family house cleaning	Corn maze	Birthday celebration	Birthday party
		Baseball at the park	Camping & fishing	Pumpkin Carving	Air Show and football	Played Tennis		



# Red Ribbon Week (cont)



KINDER		FIRST		SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	FIFTH	MIDDLE SCHOOL
Made salt artwork	Sesame Street Live Show	Went to a festival	Three Up, Three Down	Made up new board game	Built mini-skateboards	Hot Tub	Carving pumpkin	Word game
		Made an apple pie	Dinosaur Tea Party	Halloween lights	Trampoline park	Board games		
Painted pumpkin	Made cards together	Shark tooth search	Zoo / sting rays	Trunk-o-treating	"I found it" game			
		Read to a sibling	Pumpkin patch	Sleeping Queens	B-day party-Dodge Ball	Dance Recital	Dog to the beach	Others
Baked cookies or brownies	Sandcastle at the beach	"Bood" friends	Uno card game	Indoor cornhole	Beach – Shark teeth			
		Played Sorry	Hunted House	Family time	Jaguars game	Owl Prowl		
Mountain bike riding	Made goodie bags			Board games	Scavenger hunt		Boat fishing	
		Played Legos	Swimming	Festival	UNO	Yahtzee		
Dressed up and dance with Dad	Played outdoors			Bike ride	Ball pit			
		Concert	Puzzles	Jaguars game	Family dinner	Blue Angels	Beach	
Went canoeing	Planting seeds			Monopoly	Soccer			
		Played Skipbo	Soccer	Spooktacular	Diwali	Bingo		
Butterfly festival	Family bike ride			Played catch	Family dinner		Sea World	
		Bike ride	Legos	Sports Plex	Played outside	Played ball		
Noctoberfest	Fishing			Lego Land	Visit to park			
		Campfire	Glass Factory	Sports	Mud Run	Card games	Card games	
Puzzles	Lego Land			Tennis	Yahtzee			
		Yahtzee	Coloring	Uno	Noctoberfest	Movies		
				Fishing	Pumpkin Patch			
Board games	Disney World			Basketball	Noctoberfest		Soccer	
		Disney	Rode bikes	Blue Angels	Played Sorry	Zoo		



# Career Development



## 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE PARENTS:

Guidance along with 8<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History teachers will work with all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on Career Development and 4-year High School (HS) plans this month. Parents are encouraged to visit the district webpage:

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/guidance/8th-grade-career-exploration/>

This page has an abundance of information on Career Development, HS graduation requirements, HS Academies and college readiness. This link can also be found on the VRA website under Guidance in the HS information tab.

*Dates to remember:*

**December 16<sup>th</sup>** Allen D. Nease HS visit to 8<sup>th</sup> graders to talk about the different academies offered in St. John's County.

**January 9<sup>th</sup>** HS Showcase at World Golf Village Convention Center (500 South Legacy Trail, St. Augustine) 3:30-7:00 PM. For parents and students to further explore Academy choices in our county.

**January 9<sup>th</sup>** Online Academy application opens for newly applying 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

**January 16<sup>th</sup>** Allen D. Nease HS Academy Night from 6:00-7:30 PM. (please refer to the district website above for other HS Academy Night dates).

**January 31<sup>st</sup>** St. Johns County Center for the Arts Auditions at St. Augustine HS.

**February 3<sup>rd</sup>** Registration deadline for Academies - Online registration closes at 5:00 pm.



## 5<sup>th</sup> GRADE PARENTS:

**January 9<sup>th</sup>** Online application opens for newly applying 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to the Murray Middle School Arts Program.

**January 31<sup>st</sup>** Auditions for Murray Middle School Arts Program. Please bring your printed audition form.



# College Scholarship Opportunity

**YOUR CHILD MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR A COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP!**



**To be considered for the TSIC College Scholarship and Mentoring Program, your child must:**

- Have a United States social security number.
- Meet financial eligibility requirements established by the TSIC program (see below).
- Be enrolled in a St. Johns County Public School for 2019-20, as a 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grader.
- Have grades of C's and above or a 3.25 GPA in all middle school classes through Oct, 2019.
- Have passing grades on state assessments (FSA and/or EOC's).
- If accepted, sign an agreement to remain crime and drug free, attend school regularly, maintain a 2.5 grade point average, and meet with a volunteer mentor once a week through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

• Your child's middle school grade, attendance, and behavior records will be reviewed as part of the selection process

**Applications available beginning Nov. 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 at your child's school.**

**Application due on or before Friday, Dec. 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2019**

If your child meets ALL criteria listed and you are interested in the Take Stock in Children scholarship opportunity, complete the application and turn it in along with all required financial documents to your child's school guidance counselor, or to:

Jim Wheeler,  
TSIC Program Coordinator  
C/O Evelyn Hamblen Center  
St. Johns County Education Foundation dba Investing in Kids  
1 Christopher St,  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

**Family income limits for qualification:**

1. Family income cannot exceed the levels shown in the chart

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	ANNUALLY
1	\$23,107
2	\$31,284
3	\$39,461
4	\$47,638
5	\$55,815
6	\$63,992
7	\$72,169
8	\$80,346
For each additional family member, add	\$8,177

2. Two consecutive years of Federal Income Tax Returns (2017 and 2018) are required with the application

3. Income guidelines are set by the Florida Department of Education, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

**\*REQUEST AND SUBMISSION OF A COMPLETED APPLICATION DOES NOT ENSURE A SCHOLARSHIP AWARD\***

# Safe Access to VRA

## *The Day of Your Visit*

### **VRA I.D.s**

In an effort to provide safety and security to our students and staff, we check identification for **ALL** individuals entering the school building. This includes vendors and volunteers, as well as parents, guardians, grandparents, caregivers, relatives, friends, neighbors, etc.

This means that **EACH TIME** you enter the front reception area and/or sign in at school you will be asked to present your State issued photo I.D.

Please note the only forms of proper identification accepted are the following:

- Current State issued driver's license.
- Current State issued identification card (issued only by the Department of Motor Vehicles).
- If a person has a visa and/or does not have a social security number, the applicant must contact the Volunteer Services Department right away for alternate steps.

## *4-6 Weeks Before Your Visit*

### **CLEARANCE**

Anyone planning to enter the school building must have an approved School Access application on file. To complete the form click on the link:

<https://stjohns.keepntrack.com/apply/>

Complete the application, and submit. Expect the clearance process to take 4-6 weeks, so **PLEASE PLAN AHEAD.**

Keep in mind clearance is required of **ALL** visitors wishing to: volunteer in a classroom, participate in class activities, join field studies, attend an event, eat in the lunchroom, etc. This includes vendors and volunteers, as well as parents, guardians, grandparents, caregivers, relatives, friends, neighbors, etc.

If you have any questions concerning your clearance status, please contact **Heather Davis, Front Desk Receptionist**, at 904-547-4090 or

[heather.davis@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:heather.davis@stjohns.k12.fl.us)

## *Common Questions*

### **SCHOOL-AGED VISITORS**

School-aged visitors, such as cousins or friends, are not permitted to join a student for the day. Only children who are registered at VRA may attend classes.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Teachers will determine and pre-approve volunteer duties within their classroom.

It is the expectation that volunteers abide by the students dress code when volunteering at VRA.





# Camp Healing Powers



**G**rieving the death of a loved one is difficult, especially for a child. Grieving children are likely to feel different and alone.

Recognizing the need to help children through the grieving process, Community Hospice & Palliative Care established Camp Healing Powers, a therapeutic camp open to any child ages 7 to 17.

Mental health professionals plan and lead camp activities that help children identify and express their feelings and learn skills to navigate the grief journey in a safe, supportive and fun environment.

Please call 904.407.6222 for information or visit [CommunityHospice.com](http://CommunityHospice.com)



# Help Kids Cope

**I**s your family ready for the next disaster?

Learn what to do and say to prepare your family for a possible disaster. Visit

## HELP KIDS COPE

for more information.

[https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/flyer/help\\_kids\\_cope\\_flyer\\_0.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/flyer/help_kids_cope_flyer_0.pdf)

For more information on helping children during a time of trauma visit:

**School Personnel Disaster Resources** – National Child Traumatic Stress Network:

[https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/school-personnel?search=&resource\\_type=All&trauma\\_type=4&language=All&audience=33&other=All](https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/school-personnel?search=&resource_type=All&trauma_type=4&language=All&audience=33&other=All)

**National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) natural disaster resources:**

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/natural-disaster-resources/natural-disasters-brief-facts-and-tips>

# Guidance Corner

**T**his year our awesome school counselors are bringing the

## *HOME & SCHOOL CONNECTION NEWSLETTER*

to our school to share with all VRA parents, guardians and caregivers.

This monthly publication provides parents with practical tips so they can:

- Make learning fun with simple activities
- Boost motivation and improve school success
- Build positive character traits
- Strengthen family life and enhance parenting skills

We hope you enjoy and take advantage of this new resource included in the next few pages.



# Guidance Corner

## Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

November 2019

Valley Ridge Academy

Guidance Department

### SHORT NOTES



#### Promises matter

Before you promise your child something—for instance, that you'll take him to the playground—make sure you'll be able to follow through. This teaches him that he can count on you, and he'll learn to keep promises, too. *Tip:* If needed, include contingencies. ("We'll go as long as it's not raining.")

#### Speak up about allergies

Family gatherings are good opportunities for your youngster to speak up about food allergies, whether she has one herself or is being considerate of others. She might ask the host if a casserole contains eggs or tell a cousin who's allergic to dairy that there's milk in the mashed potatoes.

#### Boost working memory

This activity improves your child's working (or short-term) memory. Have him close his eyes while you draw three emojis (cupcake, sun, leaf). Let him study the paper for five seconds, flip it over, and try to name the emojis. Repeat the activity, adding one more each time. How many can he remember?

#### Worth quoting

"When you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours."  
Zig Ziglar

### JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What's black and white and black and white and black and white?

**A:** A penguin rolling down a hill.



## An atmosphere of learning

When families create a supportive learning environment at home, children are more successful in the classroom. Use these tips to make your home a great place for your youngster to learn.

#### Stock up

Fill your house with items your child can use to explore and investigate. Visit the library regularly so you always have plenty of books. Have her set aside a drawer for math and science supplies (ruler, measuring cups and spoons, food coloring, seeds). Also, display a map or globe—when she reads or hears about a place, she can discover where it's located.

#### Build on interests

Notice what your youngster is into, such as dinosaurs or music, and help her learn more about it. Read nonfiction books or watch documentaries together. Let her make a hallway gallery based on her interests. She could create and hang up posters to share interesting facts and photos with family members.



#### Learn together

Learn something new as a family. You might work on American Sign Language and then practice together. Or learn to code or knit. You'll enjoy a new hobby as you expand your knowledge. Also, plan special nights where you play board games. Try ones that build language skills (Scrabble, Boggle) or involve math or logic (Monopoly, chess).♥

### I'm thankful for...

What is your family grateful for? Try this idea to find out—and teach your child about gratitude.

**Pick categories.** Choose six crayons, and assign each color a category. *Example:* red = person, blue = place, green = object, yellow = food, orange = animal, purple = your choice. Place the crayons in a bowl, and give each person a sheet of paper.

**Draw and write.** Take turns selecting a crayon, drawing a heart on your paper, and writing something you're grateful for that matches the category. Your youngster might write "My Aunt Amy" in red and "Macaroni and cheese" in yellow.

**Share.** Once everyone has a heart of every color, read what's in your "hearts" to each other. Display the papers for a nice reminder to be grateful all year long!♥





### Conflict resolution know-how

Healthy conflict resolution skills help your child maintain friendships, solve problems, and stand up for himself in positive ways. Share these strategies.

#### Red light! Green light!

Problems are easier to solve when your youngster is calm. Suggest that he think of a feeling like anger or frustration as a "red light"—a signal to stop and think. Say he and a friend are arguing over the topic for their group



presentation. He might take a few deep breaths or walk away for a little while. Once he calms down (the light turns green), he may be ready to think of a solution, such as combining their ideas to create a whole new topic.

#### "I" statements

When your child is trying to resolve a conflict, suggest that he start each statement with "I" instead of "you." *Example:* "I get angry when I'm yelled at" rather than "You make me angry." He'll put the focus on his own feelings rather than blaming the other person—which can keep the conflict from escalating.♥

### Q & A Attend parent-teacher conferences

**Q:** My son usually gets good grades and isn't having any problems in school. Do I still need to go to a parent-teacher conference?

**A:** Yes! A conference lets you and your child's teacher exchange information beyond what's on his report card. Plus, meeting with the teacher is one way to keep the lines of communication open.



### ACTIVITY CORNER

#### Persuasive writing: Buy my product

Could your child convince someone to buy a rock? What about an ice cube? This silly family activity lets her practice persuasive writing by creating a commercial for an unlikely "product."

**1. Decide what to sell.** Ask each family member to think of something you probably wouldn't buy in real life, such as an empty cardboard box, a snowball, or a brick.

**2. Write a script.** Each person should make up a commercial advertising her product. Include a vivid description of your item and convincing reasons to buy it. *Example:* "Introducing our smooth, perfectly square ice cube! Just this single cube will keep your small glass of lemonade nice and cool—without watering it down."

**3. Present your ads.** Take turns performing your commercials in your best TV-announcer voice. The advertisement voted most persuasive wins!♥



The teacher will talk about your son's strengths and areas for improvement. For instance, he might say he has good work habits but could participate more in class. And you may get to see his writer's notebook or science journal. You'll also learn how he's doing socially—does he get along well with others?

Finally, ask the teacher what you can do at home to support your son.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
800-394-5052 • [rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com](mailto:rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com)  
[www.rfeonline.com](http://www.rfeonline.com)  
ISSN 1540-5621

### PARENT TO PARENT

#### Mix math with fitness

When my daughter Elizabeth was working on addition facts, we invented a game to help her practice—and to give all of us some exercise.

She wrote the numbers 1–10 on separate index cards, and I hid them around our yard. Then, she wrote the same numbers on separate craft sticks and put the sticks (number ends down) in a cup. We took turns drawing a stick, running to find any number card, and

adding the two numbers to get our score for that turn. So if Elizabeth drew the 10 stick and got a 6 card, her score would be 16, since  $10 + 6 = 16$ . The winner was the person with the highest score after all the sticks were used.

Our game has grown with Elizabeth. Once she mastered basic addition facts, we wrote bigger numbers to play with. And now that she's learning multiplication, we multiply to get our score.♥





# Guidance Corner

November 2019

## Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



### Short Stops

#### Asking about school

It may take a little creativity to get your tween talking about school. Instead of asking "How was school?" try "What made you laugh today?" or "What was the most interesting thing a teacher said?" *Idea:* Share something about your day first. Your child may be more likely to open up.

#### Eat your fruits and veggies

Encourage your middle grader to get more fruits and vegetables with her cafeteria lunch. She might add salad bar veggies like lettuce and tomato to her burger or chicken sandwich. And for a healthy dessert, she could dip fresh fruit like apple slices or pineapple chunks into yogurt.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Checking your tween's grades online helps you know how he's doing. However, it's important to keep in mind that grades aren't always updated every day. If you notice a low grade or a missing assignment, ask your child about it. He might have a reasonable explanation, or it's possible his teacher hasn't entered everything yet.

#### Worth quoting

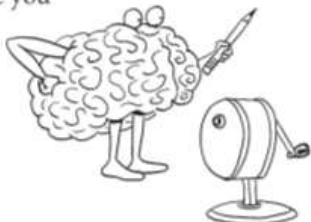
"Remember that happiness is a way of travel, not a destination."

Roy M. Goodman

#### Just for fun

**Q:** What gets sharper the more you use it?

**A:** Your brain.



## Tweens: A shifting relationship

Watching your child grow into an adolescent can be fun. You get a peek at his future adult self as his interests, opinions, and sense of humor develop. It may also be confusing, though, as he becomes more independent. Try these strategies for maintaining a strong relationship.



### Allow some space

Does your tween prefer to hang out with friends rather than with you? Does he often hole up in his room? Those behaviors are normal. Stay connected by making some family activities, such as weekend outings or dinners, non-negotiable. Also, be sure to spend time chatting with him each day. He'll find it comforting to know you're there.

### Find the positives

When your middle grader is moody, think about what you enjoy about him, such as his sense of humor or his compassion for animals. Try framing his

negative behaviors as positives. For instance, his ability to argue could be seen as a knack for debate. Or his insistence on doing things his way shows he's thinking for himself.

### Avoid comparisons

Focus on who your child is instead of comparing him to yourself at his age or to other tweens. Perhaps you played sports in middle school but he wants to build robots and join the environment club. Show interest in his activities, and ask questions to learn more about them. ("What can your robot do?" "How was the watershed cleanup?")

### Effort = results

The better your middle grader understands that hard work contributes to success, the more likely she is to put in effort. Help her see the connection with these suggestions.

■ **Focus on her actions.** Rather than saying what a great writer your child is, you might point out that all the time she spent editing her essay made it better. She'll learn that she has control over the results she gets.

■ **Encourage persistence.** When your tween faces a setback, recommend that she make adjustments rather than give up. Say she receives a lower-than-expected score on a civics quiz. She could set aside more time to study for the next quiz.





# Guidance Corner

Middle Years

November 2019 • Page 2

## Hooked on a book

Reading for pleasure will build your tween's background knowledge and vocabulary. Inspire her to read more with these ideas.

**Make reading a priority.** When your family sits around in the evening, have each person read silently instead of watching TV. Visit the library regularly so you always have books in your home. Talk to your child about what you're reading, and ask about her book.



**Read about authors.** If your middle grader likes particular books, she could visit authors' websites to learn more about them. She might search the internet to find interviews with the authors and reviews of their other books—and discover something new to read.

**Take material along.** Reading a few minutes here and there adds up. Your teen could plan ahead by packing a book everywhere she goes! That way, she can read on the subway, in the dentist's office, or while waiting for her ride home. Suggest that she grab a magazine for her purse, keep a novel in her backpack, or download an e-book so she always has something to read. 🍷

## Q & A Think first

**Q** My son sometimes makes decisions without thinking them through. How can I teach him not to make impulsive decisions?



**A** Your tween's brain is still developing—especially the part of it that controls decision making.

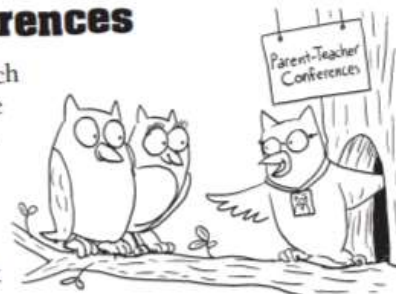
Let him know that to make good choices, he needs to consider the facts. For example, maybe he needs to pick partners for a group project. His first instinct may be to work with his best friend. But encourage him to think about who has good work habits and won't leave him doing all the work.

Also, give him experience making everyday decisions like picking out gifts for relatives or choosing the film for family movie night. For instance, rather than picking the first gift that looks cool, he should consider your family's budget and each relative's interest. 🍷

## Make the most of conferences

Use fall parent-teacher conferences to touch base with teachers early in the year and share information to support your middle grader's learning. Consider these tips:

- Get your child's input. Ask if there's anything specific he'd like you to bring up. He may want a teacher to know he feels hesitant about raising his hand in class, for instance.
- Ask about your tween's strengths as well as areas where he could improve. Maybe you'll find out that he loves helping other students but needs to manage his time better in class. Also, get advice on how you can support him at home.
- Point out what you notice at home. Perhaps he's enjoying a math game the teacher recommended, or maybe he's struggling with a science project. This gives teachers useful information for challenging and assisting your child. 🍷



## Parent to Parent

### Empathy can prevent bullying

My sister's son was being bullied in school. Thankfully, she worked with the counselor and the situation was resolved—and my sister learned something interesting that she shared with me.

The counselor told my sister that empathy is an antidote to bullying. He said when kids really understand and care about how others feel, they're far less likely to bully. That got me thinking about ways I could approach the subject with my daughter Dara.

When she mentioned that a classmate's parent was sick, I encouraged her to call the girl regularly and perhaps even send a card or cookies.

I also try to show empathy for Dara if she's upset about something, rather than saying, "You'll be fine." When a boy she liked didn't feel the same way about her, I related a similar experience I had in middle school.

I'm hopeful that our focus on empathy will help Dara be kind toward others and never participate in bullying. 🍷



## OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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# Child Safety Matters

**M**s. MacNaught has been going into 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms teaching Safety Matters curriculum this month. The information sheet below explains what has been taught and gives an activity that parents can do with their children to further reinforce the lessons.

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child participated in the MBF Child Safety Matters® program today. The program teaches children how to spot and respond to bullying, cyberbullying, child abuse, and digital dangers. It teaches that adults are responsible for children's safety, but also details ways that kids can help adults keep them safe. The Program is based on the latest research and has been reviewed and endorsed by national experts.

Below is a summary of what your child learned and some suggestions about how you can continue these safety lessons at home. As with other subjects, the more you practice with your child, the more likely they will be able to use what they have learned. For additional information and resources, visit our website at [www.mbfpreventioneducation.org](http://www.mbfpreventioneducation.org) and download our free "Child Safety Matters" app from the App Store or Google Play.

Your child learned...	How You Can Reinforce Your Child's Learning:
<p>...about safety, Safe Adults, Red Flags that indicate danger, and safe versus unsafe situations.</p> <p>...about the four types of child abuse: physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect.</p> <p>... that adults, and sometimes other children, can use tricks, secrets, gifts, and force to try to hurt children.</p> <p>... the MBF Child Safety Matters Safety Rules. These rules teach children to help adults keep them safe.</p> 	<p><b>Practice Safety Rules and Spotting Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Ask your child to describe the Safety Rules and demonstrate the motions that go with them.</li><li>» Ask your child to list a few Red Flags.</li><li>» Ask your child how children are hurt or put into unsafe situations (examples include tricks, secrets, and force).</li><li>» Use everyday activities to ask your child how they might use the Safety Rules if a situation was unsafe.</li></ul> <p><b>Pick Safe Adults</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Ask your child who their Safe Adults are, or assist them with identifying at least two Safe Adults. We recommend choosing Safe Adults both in and out of the home.</li><li>» Encourage your child to tell their Safe Adults if they encounter unsafe situations or need support.</li><li>» Help your child distribute their "Safe Adult Bookmarks."</li><li>» Help your child understand the difference between helping and tattling. Telling a Safe Adult is helping, not tattling.</li></ul> <p><b>Talk about Family Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Consider creating a "family password" that only family members know. Tell your child that they should never go with someone who does not know the family password. Be sure to emphasize that no matter what that person tells them, they should only go if that person knows the password. Explain to them they should never share the password with people outside of the family.</li><li>» Teach your child the correct names for their private body parts. This helps avoid confusion if they need to talk about unsafe situations or disclose abuse.</li></ul> <p>Complete the activity on the back side of this sheet with your child.</p>

## MBF Child Safety Matters Safety Rules



Know What's Up



Make a Move



No Blame /  
No Shame



Spot Red Flags



Talk It Up



# Child Safety Matters (cont.)



## Safety Connection 5.1: Parent & Child Activity

### WORD SCRAMBLE

**Child Instructions:** Unscramble each of the words on the left using the word bank. Then, use the letters in the numbered squares to complete the mystery phrase at the bottom of the page.

**Parent Instructions:** As your child unscrambles each word, talk with them about the word and what they learned about it during the MBF Child Safety Matters® lesson. Use this as an opportunity to talk about the 5 Safety Rules and how to spot Red Flags.

For additional information and resources, visit [www.mbfpreventioneducation.org](http://www.mbfpreventioneducation.org) and download the "Child Safety Matters" app from the App Store or Google Play.

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WORD BANK

- BOUNDARY
- CHILD ABUSE
- CONSEQUENCES
- EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- FORCE
- INJURIES
- NEGLECT
- PHYSICAL ABUSE
- RESPECT
- RESPONSIBILITY
- SAFE ADULT
- SEXUAL ABUSE
- THREAT
- TRICK
- TRUST

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# Lunchroom News



**PREPAYMENTS** to your child's meal account with a debit or credit card can be made, just log on to [SchoolPay.com](http://SchoolPay.com). Payment can also be received by the food service manager in the form of check or cash. If check is used, please indicate **students' names and 2 phone numbers** on the check. Prepayment is encouraged as it assists in movement of students through the line.

**Any meal charges will be the responsibility of the adult/guardian.** At \$0 balance, no a la carte purchases are permitted. Any debt must be paid before a la carte purchases can be made.

*Breakfast:*

\$1.25 / Reduced \$0.30

*Elementary Lunch:*

\$2.80 / Reduced \$0.40

*Secondary Lunch:*

\$2.95 / Reduced \$0.40

**RESTRICTIONS** can be placed on your student's meal account. Once restrictions are placed, they cannot be removed unless the parent provides the food service manager with a letter asking for the restrictions to be removed.

**STUDENT ACCOUNT BALANCES** and purchases can be obtained on [SchoolPay.com](http://SchoolPay.com) at no charge to you. Low balance reminders can be set up as well.

Parents are encouraged to complete one **FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEAL APPLICATION** per family, rather than one per child. The application can be obtained **ONLINE** at [www.stjohns.K12.fl.us](http://www.stjohns.K12.fl.us) and printed off and completed, or one can be completed online by following the link to online Free and Reduced Family Meal Application. Schools have limited availability of printed applications.

This single application for the family may be returned to any of the District

schools where parents have a child/children enrolled; we prefer that parents return the application to the school where their youngest child is enrolled. The schools will be sending all completed applications to the District School Food Services Office for centralized approval.

Until the application is processed and approved by the District Food Service Office, any meal charges will be the responsibility of the adult/guardian.

The approval process can take up to ten (10) days at the beginning of the school year.

