



November 14, 2016

Link Letter

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Principally Speaking

"In a World Where You Can Be Anything, Be Kind."

- Unknown

Last week was a big week in terms of the election. We have a diverse community, so there is a range of opinions and feelings about the results. No matter where you fall on those spectrums, I ask that you take an extra pause in the short term to make sure what you are speaking, in person and on social media, comes off with kindness. Feelings on all sides can get pretty intense at times, so the extra pause helps make sure the intensity doesn't cause something potentially hurtful to slip through. It can also help keep our hurts and fears from doing the talking, rather than the best part of ourselves.

This is a great time for our entire community (not just the kids) to reaffirm our commitment to the Three B's:

- Be Kind to yourself
- Be Kind to others
- Be Kind to the environment

When you do feel tensions or hurt in connection to another in our community, reach out with kindness to seek greater understanding and resolution. And when someone reaches out to you in this way, please listen and respond with kindness in return. As you'll hear more about our Reggio inspired approach in Mrs. Cooper's column, I'd like to highlight that we believe in "Education Based On Relationships" as a part of our approach. Thank you for continuing to help us build up our community of relationships especially when we disagree.



Movie Night This Friday

Join us for another movie night this Friday. Look for details under Family Team Corner.

You Can Learn Anything

A great resource for catching up on learning, and moving on to new learning, is KhanAcademy.org. It can be used both by children and by adults. Topics range from early math, to computer animation, to grammar, to music. (If you'd like a little extra dimension of fun with the site, add me as your coach using code WCYEMQ.) For more about how we can all find success through effort, see this video by the entertainer John Legend: <http://bit.ly/YCLAjLgnd>

That's it for now. Keep Discovering. Thank you for reading, and for your commitment to Be Kind!

Coach 😊

John Robinson, Principal/Executive Director/Superintendent
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Family Team Corner

GRCDC depends on parent volunteers to help perform many vital functions around the school, including crossing guards, lunch-room helpers, and classroom helpers. Parents can also assist with events, either by being involved with planning and organizing, or by helping out during the event. All Family Team events are planned and run by parents, including fundraising and teacher appreciation. We encourage all parents to be involved by finding volunteer opportunities that fit their skills and availability. If you have any questions or would like more information about how you might be able to help, please email Jessie and Natasha at GRCDCFamilyTeam@gmail.com

Remember to check the lost and found! Items accumulate quickly, especially during transitional seasons. All unclaimed items will be donated over winter break.

The minutes of the November Family Team Meeting can be found by following this link: <http://bit.ly/2g7vPZa>

Family Movie Night is this Friday. Doors open at 5:30, show begins at 6:00. We are watching "Nightmare Before Christmas".

Central Office Updates

- **Wreath Pick Up** is happening this Thursday. Please see the times in the calendar below.
- **Thanksgiving Break begins** Wednesday, November 23rd. We have Wednesday, Thursday and Friday off from school.
- **Winter Break** is shortened this year due to the state mandated increase in the number of school days and another state mandate for schools to follow the common calendar that is set by our area intermediate school district (Kent ISD). Please be aware and plan family trips to coincide with the planned days off from school. This is a reminder for you as we made efforts to get the word out about this as early as June of this year via a letter that was mailed home, in the Link Letter and in the printed school calendar.

Calendar

The calendar also available at grcdc.org

11/14	Math Club until 4:30 (5th grade) GRCDC Board Meeting, 6:00—8:00 PM
11/15	Math Club until 4:30 PM (4th grade)
11/16	Early Release Day, Dismissal at 1:10 PM Math Club until 2:30 PM (5th grade) Art Club until 2:30 PM
11/17	Odyssey of the Mind until 5:00 PM Math Club until 4:30 PM (4th grade) Wreath pick up day, 3:00—3:30 or 5:00—6:00 PM
11/18	Afternoon Meeting, 3:00—3:15 PM Movie Night, Doors open at 5:30, Movie begins at 6:00
11/23-11/25	Thanksgiving Break, NO SCHOOL
12/2	First Friday Food
12/23—1/2	NO SCHOOL, Winter Break The last day the school is in session before Winter Break is Thursday, December 22nd. There will be no school starting Friday, December 23 through Monday, January 2nd. The first day back in session will be Tuesday, January 3rd.

Please arrange for your child to **arrive at school between 7:45—8:00 am**. Please sign your child in at the office if arrival is after 8:05 am.

Dismissal is 3:15 pm M, T, Th, F and 1:10 pm on Wednesdays

The Philosophy by Sarah Cooper

Last week's presidential election results initiated protests and celebrations alike throughout the nation, our state and our local community. The expansive range of emotions throughout the country is also present in all of us here at school. Our children feel deeply too.

Our school community remains a place for all people, all beliefs and strives to bring people together. Last week our teachers held space for students to begin processing, uncovering fears and asking questions. Teachers reassured children they were safe, loved and free to ask questions. This work is only just beginning.

The GRCDC, as a Reggio Emilia inspired school, was designed to honor voice, activism and collaboration. The founder of the approach, Loris Malaguzzi, recognized political and social influences that impact communities. When faced with adversity, he called for connectedness:

"The supportive atmosphere of the school by principle is open and democratic, inviting an exchange of ideas and suppressing distance between people; thus, in all circumstances, the school maintains its effectiveness and a welcoming feeling to all concerned. The loneliness, the separation, the indifferences, and the violence that more and more characterize modern life undermine our proposal for a system of education based on relationships. For us, however, the difficult social situation is a reason for working even harder at what we do, and as a result the families welcome our efforts to counteract negative influences..."

The strength of this view of education is in opening the forms and functions of relationships and interaction. We seek to support social exchanges that better ensure the flow of expectations, activities, corporation, conflicts, and choices." (Malaguzzi, 1993, p. 10)

Malaguzzi's words here inspire our daily practices at the GRCDC and provokes us to embed learning opportunities that support social and emotional development. Discovery teachers intentionally plan experiences so children can learn to effectively share their thinking, negotiate respectfully within a group and solve problems collaboratively. Our Reggio inspired way of working suggests that collaboration will yield a greater, more meaningful outcome than we can do individually. These are important practices and values because they serve to support our community years down the road when our students become adults, active in their communities.

Our educational approach based on relationships can truly be tested in times of transition and uncertainty. Rather than division, however, I have witnessed togetherness. Parents connected with each other in person and virtually. Our teachers and staff, despite their own emotions, began thoughtful dialogues to support students. Many children discussed their reactions among friends and peers. Our school community seemed to be a source of comfort for many and I am so grateful.

I look forward to connecting with you,

Sarah Cooper, Pedagogista
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Grand Rapids Nutrition Center

The full menu is available on our website:
<http://grcdc.org/be-connected/link-letters/>

Breakfast (\$1.50):	Lunch (\$2.75):
Milk only: \$0.50	
T— Mini egg & cheese	Italian Meatball Sub
W— French toast sticks	Breakfast for lunch
Th— Scrambled eggs	Cheesy Chicken Quesadilla
F— Egg, cheese, sausage slider	Double stuff cheese pizza
M 11/21—French toast	Chicken fajita

GRCDC's First Let Me Run 5K finishers!



Eight 4th and 5th grade boys ran in the Bold and Brave 5K this past Saturday. This race was a culmination of 7 weeks of training with the Let Me Run curriculum & running program. We are so proud of each runner! It was also really exciting to see GRCDC sweep the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the 11 and under age group! A big shout out to the coaches, Erik Dahl, Sara Dailey & Chris DeBlaay. And thank you to the parents who ran with us, Amy Ostrow (who also helped coach one day!), Katie Fredricks and Stephanie Myers. We would also like to thank Mr. Trevor for his support all season and for getting great photos of the race day.

Community Corner



Families of Flint still need our help! The Flint Water Crisis continues to affect thousands of families and forces them to live with polluted water in their communities.

How can you help? Please join Erica Soto, a GRCDC parent, by donating any amount of sealed water cases or monetary contributions to buy water cases. She will be collecting donations through December 3rd. All donations will be delivered to residents of Flint, Michigan on December 5th and 6th. You may drop off donations at Roosevelt Park Ministries located at 1530 Grandville Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

If you have questions you may contact Erica at 616-206-9602, ekyma7@gmail.com or you may contact Taqiyya Hinds at 860-984-2174, Taqiyya_Hinds1@icloud.com

For monetary donations you may visit:
<https://www.gofundme.com/flint-water-relief-2w857z8>

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