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March Monthly Update

Good Morning Orchard School!

Happy April Fool's Day! Seems like the weather may be playing along with us. I hope you are all staying dry and warm! Monday is our first day of April lunch, so please remember to [order lunch for your student!](#)

We had a wonderful day at Celebrate Learning on Friday. Thank you to the many parents and family members who made time in their day to come and visit at school. The students have been excited for weeks and it means so much to them to share their learning with you. We hope that you enjoyed your visit with us!

Community Outreach Programs: Our last program was cancelled due to weather. The next program will be held on Tuesday evening, entitled "Least Restrictive Environment (Special Education)" on 4/4/17.

We have two outreach programs in April, so please mark your calendars for Tuesday, April 18, with Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair when we discuss Family Relationships in the Digital Age - 7 PM @ GWMS. She is the author of [The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age](#). (Related: read below on Media and Students - this could be a great springboard for a larger discussion at Orchard).

Please also mark your calendars for May 23, when we will host Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, a pediatrician at CHOP and a professor for UPenn's school of medicine. He will be with us for the day, providing two separate discussions: 9:30 AM @ the Ridgewood Library (Fostering Resilience) and 7 PM @ GWMS (Authentic Success). For more information, please visit the [RPS website](#) to view the folder for the 2016-17 Well-Being series. Hope to see you there!

Driving in and Around Orchard School: The recent rainy weather has heightened the difficulties with driving around our school property. This has been a discussion as a larger issue in the past, and we can consider approaching the village again with our concerns. In the meantime, please consider the following:

- The fire lane (red painted area that we utilize as drop off in the AM) is not a pickup and go area in the PM. Orchard does not currently offer a pick up and go option. If you cannot find a spot in the lot, you are encouraged to park on existing side streets. While inconvenient, please recognize that the existing traffic rules are there for our safety.
- When leaving Orchard School at peak times (drop off and dismissal), please consider turning right onto Doremus. One can quickly make a right onto Rutland just past the Glen Rock pool, and then turn onto Lincoln. While many of our families do not go in this direction, it is worth considering, particularly in making an additional loop back to Bellair. Again, this is not a mandate, but a request. Give it a try if you haven't before!
- In the morning, please pull all the way up for drop off, and do not come out of the line for drop off in the AM. If you have already dropped off, going around another car is a concern as students/parents may be crossing in front of you. Please just wait the extra moment so that we can all be safe!
- Finally, please share and voice these concerns with your caregivers. Many times, I find myself giving these reminders to caregivers or grandparents. Please be sure that those who transport your child understand our rules. Thank you!

How to Raise a Reader: Recently, I read a blog post by a fellow principal in Wisconsin. He shared a short segment on why reading aloud to your child is so powerful. It's important to consider how this fits into your home. Are you able to make it into a ritual? Does it happen with older children, not just your K-2 students? [Check out his post](#) for tips and to learn more about the benefits of reading aloud. You may also enjoy reading the "[Ten Commandments](#)" according to Mem Fox (beloved children's author). Her list is certainly more primary centered but a quick and easy read! As we consider these posts, I would love to hear your thoughts on how our own required reading for homework ties into the concept of reading aloud to your child. Please feel free to email me directly at mkferreri@ridgewood.k12.nj.us.

Media and Students: Recently, the Mahwah Municipal Alliance published a pamphlet regarding social media use and the dangers of cyberbullying and sexting. Typically, those issues

tend to increase at the middle and high school level, but as elementary parents it is important that we are educated and informed before we hand over the “golden ticket” (aka, the cell phone). You can view their pamphlet in its entirety by [visiting their website](#) and [downloading the PDF](#).

In related conversation, I have recently participated in some informal discussions with parents and families regarding screen time, and what’s appropriate or expected from students. We all struggle as parents with setting limits and enforcing these rules, even for ourselves. An [article last November in The Atlantic](#) is one of many written recently discussing the psychological effects of the use of cell phones, other devices, and some popular apps. While we once used the phrase “cell phone addiction” with a giggle and a hint of sarcasm, it’s becoming more and more apparent that this is in fact not a joke, but an actual cause for concern in some cases.

As we begin to set the stage for 17-18 and plan the school year to come, I would love the opportunity to host some informal discussions on this topic or similar (screen time, media use, etc.). As a community, I would imagine that we have similar views and beliefs, but an overall difficulty putting that into practice, particularly with the social norms that exist for our students. Again, I welcome your feedback. Would you be interested in such discussions? Would you come out to Orchard School for them? Day/Night events? Perhaps we can put together some informal nights next year where we can meet to discuss this as a whole. Please email me directly with your thoughts - mkferreri@ridgewood.k12.nj.us. Thanks!

As with every monthly update, we need some short reminders. Please read below on items of note:

- The first grade play is on Thursday, 4/6 @ 9 AM.
- Please note that there is no school for students on Monday, 4/17. This is a staff development day for teachers.
- Spirit Day is Thursday, 4/27!
- Link and follow our Google Calendar for HSA events! [Go to this link](#) and click on the +Google Calendar in the right bottom corner.
- Please remind those you know to register for Kindergarten (or other grades) at Orchard School for 2017-18. Registration is now open!

Please review the list of dates below for upcoming events at our school. Thank you for reading our monthly update!

Warmly,

Mrs. Ferreri

Upcoming events:

4/4: Community Outreach Program: Least Restrictive Environments (Ed Center, 7 PM)

4/6: Grade 1 Play (9 AM)

4/10 - 4/16: Spring Break!

4/17: Staff Development Day - No School for Students

4/18: Community Outreach Program: Protecting Family Relationships in Digital Age (GW, 7:00 PM)

4/21: HSA Meeting - Spotlight on Grade 2

4/26: Author Visit (1-5); 9 AM (Phil Bildner)

4/27: SPIRIT DAY!; CBA @ 2:25;

4/29: Drama Club Performance, 7 PM