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October Update

Good Afternoon Orchard School Families!

Halloween has come and gone, and we have set our sights upon November. As we put our costumes away, we turn next to Election Day, an important one here in the town of Ridgewood. It is crucial that we remember the paramount privilege we have as citizens - our right to vote - and I sincerely hope that each and every one of you exercise it on November 8.

While the national Presidential election is certainly stuffing the news feeds, I trust that you are also informing yourself about the Full Day Kindergarten vote in Ridgewood. Most recently, Dr. Fishbein's column in our local Ridgewood News was devoted to the vote ("It's time to have your say on Full Day K") and throughout the month of October various events were held to inform the public about this question. With just one week to go, I offer one final look at my "top 5" pieces of information regarding the Full Day Kindergarten vote:

1. Kindergarten teachers and elementary principals in the district are overwhelmingly supportive of the move to Full Day Kindergarten. We believe that this will provide students the opportunity to delve deeper into subject areas and to explore their learning through hands on experiences. We welcome the opportunity to bring play and socialization to the Kindergarten classrooms here in Ridgewood!
2. Ridgewood is the sole remaining town in Bergen County that does not offer some semblance of a full day program for Kindergarten. We know that New Jersey has first-rate public schools, that Bergen County schools are outstanding, and that Ridgewood's are exceptional...but, we are lagging behind in this particular area.
3. The cost of implementing Full Day Kindergarten Ridgewood is \$16 per year on every \$100 K of assessed value on a home. That amounts to \$111/year for the average assessed home in Ridgewood.
4. It is not possible for our district to incorporate the cost of Full Day Kindergarten into our operating budget without cuts to other successful programs or important curricular or co-curricular initiatives. Understanding the constraints of the 2% budget cap can be

difficult. This is one of the most Frequently Asked Questions regarding the vote for Full Day K. Important information, presentations, and the other FAQ's can be accessed [here](#).

5. Pre-read your sample election ballot when it arrives in the mail. Be sure that you understand the wording for the question and are prepared to find it on the ballot (hint: scroll all the way to the bottom).

Ultimately, the privilege of voting is a unique American right, and the voice of the majority will be heard and valued. When you walk into that voting booth on Tuesday, 11/8, it is my sincere wish that you do so with a strong understanding for your position. Vote informed, and VOTE!

As we head into October, I have a few topics to remind you about...

Orchard HSA Auction Winner Parking Spot: Please note that the reserved spot in the lot, marked with a white and blue sign indicating "HSA Auction Winner", is a *reserved spot*. Please do not park in this location! This spot is auctioned off at our spring auction and a donation was received for this spot. We appreciate your cooperation.

HSA Meeting & Spotlight on Grade 5: On Friday, November 18, we are excited to host our next HSA meeting. We hope that many of you can make an effort to attend - even if you can't stay for the full meeting! At this meeting, we will begin our grade level spotlights. We will begin with our 5th grade! Our new school nurse, Mrs. Karen Coates, will present on fifth grade health classes and curriculum. This is sure to be an important presentation. Many of you will remember that Mrs. Coates spoke last year in the district's Well-Being series, when she presented "Puberty for Petrified Parents". Her talk was well received and an abbreviated version is planned for our 11/18 meeting. We hope that you can attend to meet Mrs. Coates and our fifth grade team! The meeting is at 8:45 in the library.

Community Outreach Program: This month, the Ridgewood Public Schools will host Ken Bartolo, whose talk "There and Back" focuses on addiction and recovery. Ken, a former professional lacrosse player and college athlete, will focus on reducing drug and alcohol abuse among students from elementary school to college, with an emphasis on student athletes. While it might seem to be a topic unrelatable for an elementary school community, it is unfortunately not too early for this topic. Join Ken on 11/16 at 7 PM at GWMS. Please also note that the *November 1 Community Outreach program has been postponed*. For more information, please visit the [RPS website](#) to view the folder for the 2016-17 Well-Being series.

Last month, the district hosted Dr. Robert Brooks. His talk was outstanding and very well received. If you missed it, here are three* main takeaways from my notes:

- When your child is struggling: Normalize your child's feelings and empathize with them (does not mean you agree) - "I/we know it's not easy for you, and it's not easy for other kids too. Maybe together we can figure out what will make it a little easier". Offer hope, if appropriate: "Sometimes it will get easier when you get older".
- How to build empathy in your children (Dr. Brooks' #1 quality for children): Do you, as adults, model this in your interactions with others? Your children? Your spouse? Do your children see you as grateful? Do they view you participating in charitable/volunteer work? *Do we help each family member feel supported and loved?* Supporting others, being positive with others, giving back and participating in charitable work gives our lives purpose and meaning.
- Children are important, too: Look at the areas/activities that bring your child dignity. Embrace those areas that make them shine - even if they aren't "your thing". Does this child feel dignified in my presence? Am I saying/doing things to my children that I would like said/done to me? Do I accept my child for who they are...and not who I want them to be?
- *Bonus item - how to get your child to pay attention to you: When speaking with them, instead of lecturing them, start with: "I am going to say something now, and I want you to tell me if you agree/disagree with this statement".
- For more information, visit <http://www.drrobertbrooks.com/> and also check out some of his books!

As with every monthly update, we need reminders about our procedures and policies here at Orchard. Please read below on two items of note:

- Link and follow our Google Calendar for HSA events! [Go to this link](#) and click on the +Google Calendar in the right bottom corner.
- Lunch Ordering: Just some reminders for ordering lunch through [Village Fresh](#). All orders are placed online. Orders must be in by 8:00 AM, otherwise, they will not be delivered on that day. November lunches begin TODAY! Thank you!

Please review the list of dates below for upcoming events at our school. Wishing you a wonderful, *thankful*, busy November!

Warmly,

Mrs. Ferreri

Upcoming events:

11/1-11/3: Book Fair

11/1: Community Outreach Program - Special Education 101 - 7 PM @ Ed Center

11/7: Jingle Bell Jog Food Drive Begins (through 11/18)

11/8: Election Day!

11/10-11: NJEA Convention (No School)

11/18: HSA Meeting (Spotlight on Grade 5 & Health - Karen Coates, R.N.; last day JBJ Food Drive

11/23: Kindergarten Feast - 10 AM Cafetorium; Minimum Day ~ 12:45 Dismissal

11/24-25: No School - Thanksgiving Recess

12/1: Author Visit - Dan Gutman