

January 11, 2018

Dear Wenonah Parents and Students,

Over the past several years, we have participated in the **National Kindness & Justice Challenge** honoring the values of tolerance and non-violence in memory of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This national challenge addresses our mandated character education curriculum, and reinforces qualities and actions such as celebrating diversity, acting fairly, being honest, working cooperatively and caring for others. The Kindness & Justice Challenge will take place January 16<sup>th</sup> through January 26<sup>th</sup>.

This year's challenge will focus on building our students' capacity for "empathy". Empathy is simply seeing the world through another person's eyes. When we show empathy we understand the perspectives of others and are able to sense other people's emotions. Research has shown that with the use of technology we have a significant decrease in face-to-face communication. Empathy skills are down 40% while narcissism rates are up 58%. Our world has become increasingly impersonal and our best chance to combat cruelty and bullying is to promote awareness, understanding, and sensitivity to others. Students that show empathy are peaceful problem solvers and team players. They are supportive of others and possess a courage to stand up for what is right. Empathy is at the heart of caring actions in our world. For the next two weeks our teachers will be developing our students understanding of empathy through literature discussion and classroom activities. We will challenge our students to make an effort to understand how others are feeling and to take action accordingly.

For week one, your child will be asked to think about a kind act that they did for someone based on what they thought that person was feeling. For example, a kind act for a friend who was frustrated doing assignment might be to help them with that assignment. Including someone in a game or group might be the action they could take if they thought someone was feeling left out and lonely. We would like them to describe their act on the heart they have been given and return it to their teachers on **Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup>**

For week two, we will ask students to focus on performing acts of fairness. This could be as simple as taking turns playing a game, showing good sportsmanship in gym or finding a "win-win" solution for sharing a toy. They are asked to describe this act on the second heart they are provided and return it to their teacher on **Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>**.

We also plan to include parents and teachers in our K & J challenge with some fun home and school activities. I look forward to an inspiring two weeks as we all practice one of the most important of life's skills!

Sincerely,

Christine DiPaola