

Back at the Farm

A newsletter of the Parker Farms School

Where Children are First and Character Counts!

Volume 55

October 2009

Character Pillar: Trustworthiness



From the desk of Mr. O'Neill
Principal

Our first character pillar, trustworthiness, is an important building block of a successful family life, school experience, and career. Those who are trustworthy will enjoy more opportunity, meaningful relationships, and satisfaction in their daily living.

What is trustworthiness? Trustworthy people are honest in their words and actions, do what they say they are going to do, and do what is right (even when it is difficult).

We understand that children make mistakes. We emphasize that it is important to admit the mistake and find ways to correct it. The damage caused by the mistake is usually less significant than the damage caused by adopting dishonesty as a personality trait.

Find ways to model doing the "right" thing for your child. Explain to them the choices you had and the reason you made a good decision. Emphasize how trustworthiness builds strong relationships and is an expectation in your family. Even if it doesn't seem that way now, children are likely to adopt the values of their family if they are modeled on a regular basis.

I would like to thank families for their continued support of our home reading program. Requiring reading at home every day is one of the most important things you can do to support your child's education.

Finally, please accept our best wishes for a happy, relaxing holiday season. We wish you and your family nothing but the best.



Winners of the Kid for Character Awards

Pre-K & K: Mikayla-Lynn Vandyke, Jordan Hayes, Kaylee Xie, Adriana Balsamo, Eamon Burke, Nora Moran, Jennifer Yoder, Irem Elevli, Anna Duman, Cameron Brittell, Christopher Quezada, Ashley Ruiz

1st Grade: : Brianna Hemstock, Olivia Pannone, Zachary Kremzar, Ashley Douglass, Victoria Petrovich, Mirna Khella, Abigail Grossman, Ruvicely Calvillo, Mackenzie Bushey

2nd Grade: Kinsley Wallace, Mary Duman, Allyssa Cassella, Joseph Tang, Matthew Marquis, Ivanna Roque, Ulysses Dominguez, Jayden Farnsworth, Kayla Carrano

3rd Grade: Kevin Vining, Olivia Robles, Emily Burns, Dale Arnold, Kelly Musante, Randy Dang, John Yoder, Antonio Marmol, Alexia Amenta

4th Grade: Collin Mercuriano, Rogenry Munoz, Jailene Ruiz, Stephen Fengler, Andrew D'Avignon, Erl Nelson Abayao, Madison Neilander, Aubrey Benzing, Paul Duman

5th Grade: Emma Lupo, Gianelly Landolfi, Jason LaRock, Izabella Roque, Gillian SengSeng Macalalad, Thomas Neal, Sarah Houde, Alec Apuzzo, Emily Vazquez

Upcoming Assemblies at 2:20 PM

Grade 4	Respect	12/2/09
Grade 3	Citizenship	1/20/10
Grade 2	Responsibility	3/3/10
Grade 1	Fairness	4/14/10
Kindergarten	Caring (at 10:30AM)	6/2/10

Staff certification: As part of the "No Child Left Behind Law", parents have a right to know the certification of their child's teachers. If you would like that information, please contact Mr. O'Neill at 294-6200 or by e-mail at moneill@wallingford.k12.ct.us



What You Can Do As Parents

By: Noël Cain, School Social Worker

294-6206

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Trustworthiness and trust are important concepts to teach our children. By setting examples of truthful, honest behavior, we give our children wonderful gifts.

So, what should you do with a child who lies often? It's important to think about why children (and adults) lie. Many children lie to avoid the punishment and consequences, including the anger and disappointment others feel towards them. Sometimes, children lie because they cannot cope with all the pressure and demands on them and find it easier to skirt their responsibilities through lying. Also, children lie because they do not want to face the fact that they make mistakes and aren't perfect. It is very human to avoid facing the fact that one is only human.



Always encourage your children to tell the truth. When they are honest and truthful, especially when it's hard to be, praise them and let them know you really appreciate their honesty.



Model honesty and trustworthiness in your own behavior. Always tell your children the truth. Choose words that are appropriate for their age and developmental level.

Tell your children lots of stories about people who are honest and people who deal with problems in their lives by telling the truth. Teach your children the benefits of telling the truth and the importance of trust. Let them know that lying only destroys trust.

When your child does lie, don't overreact. This will only encourage your child to lie to avoid your angry display. Let your child know in a calm voice that lying is unacceptable behavior. Give him/her a consequence

that fits the crime. For example, if a child lies about breaking something, ask him/her to tell the truth to the person who owns the item. Practice what to say ahead of time so that the child learns how to tell the truth correctly. Once the child has owned up to it and apologized, it may be necessary for him/her to replace the item by earning money to buy it with extra chores, etc.



Finally, don't label your child a "liar." Often times, children internalize these labels and then become what others have labeled them to be. Instead, separate the behavior from the child. Let the child know that you expect more from her/him and that you know she/he is a good person who made a poor choice.

Mrs. Cain is a licensed clinical social worker who works full-time at Parker Farms School. She works individually or in small groups with students in need of emotional support. She can be reached at 294-6206 or by e-mail at ncain@wallingford.k12.ct.us

Classroom News

Character Counts in Kindergarten

In kindergarten, the students are learning that it is important to be trustworthy if they want to make new friends. A good friend is someone who is honest with his or her words and actions. The students



listened to a story called, The Truth Pops Out, and then role-played how they could be trustworthy in a variety of different situations. They learned that although

it may sometimes be easier to lie, in the end, the "truth pops out" and they might be in more trouble because they didn't tell the truth. Even worse, whoever they lied to might no longer trust them. The kindergartners also know that being trustworthy is doing what you're supposed to do. They have demonstrated this in centers when there isn't an adult working with them. The kindergartners have done a great job showing they are trustworthy!

Character Counts in Grade 1

The first grade being past six weeks.



students worked on trustworthy for the Students went over the importance of telling the truth. They learned to use their privacy folders in

school to make sure that their eyes stay on their own papers. Some students also read Strega Nona by Tomie dePaola and talked about how Big Anthony was not trustworthy in this book. Students concluded their learning on trustworthiness by attending the Character Counts Assembly. Three students from each class were chosen by the teacher and the class to receive an award for showing trustworthiness throughout the entire six weeks.

Character Counts in Grade 2

The second grade has worked hard to understand the



Trustworthiness Pillar of our Character Counts Program. They have had experiences that helped them to obey the rules of their classroom and school, to be honest, to stand up for others and to be a help when needed and to be a

good friend.

We have had the opportunity to leave the school setting and visit the Wallingford Public Library and the Sheehan Planetarium. The children have demonstrated the qualities of good character that they have learned here at Parker Farms. How nicely they have represented the school family out in their community.



Character Counts in Grade 3

For the first six weeks of school, third graders have been working hard with their new teachers. They



prove they are trustworthy on a daily basis as they take responsibility for school work and homework. In our science unit, students participate in experiments on a daily basis. Teachers trust them to follow

directions and take care of classroom supplies. Third graders are showing that they are kids for character. The books we read aloud in class also follow our pillar of trustworthiness. Too Many Tamales by Gary Soto is wonderful story about a young girl who makes a mistake. Maria is brave enough to confess her mistake and proves that she's a trustworthy character. We learned a big lesson with Maria's help. Telling the truth isn't always easy but it's best in the long run. As our quote of the week says, "A lie has speed, but truth has endurance."



Character Counts in Grade 4

Fourth Grade students took part in many activities focusing on trustworthiness. Several discussions took place on what it means to be a good friend ... "doing what you say that you will do" and "being honest about what you say and do, even if you made a poor choice" should be daily goals in life. Group



problem solving about what to do when you find something that doesn't belong to you and what to do when you haven't read the 30 minutes of home reading one night. We

showed good character during weekly Reading Buddies and some students model this behavior daily as Peer Mediators and Parker Pals. We discussed examples of trustworthiness in outstanding literature like On My Honor and Tales of A Fourth Grade Nothing.

Character Counts in Grade 5

As we conclude our first pillar on Trustworthiness,



we would like to tell you about what we have been doing to teach our students about what it means to be trustworthy. For instance, there are many ways in which students can learn the value of trustworthiness by

completing homework assignments as assigned, handing in permission slips, turning in reading logs, and collecting money for fundraisers. In addition, students have discussed various characters within novels that display trustworthiness as well as reflect

on how they are trustworthy as individuals. Students then thought about what trustworthy means and choose students from their classes that they thought exemplified trustworthiness.

Overall, students have read books, reflected, and responded to the first pillar of Character Counts! Trustworthiness. All of our students performed in the Character Counts! show featuring "The Trustworthy Beatles" for the entire school. This musical taught our students, and the entire school, that "We all Need a Little Trust from our Friends"



When Parents Disagree

By Judy Acosta, School Psychologist

"Everyone says my wife and I should maintain a united front with the children. I think she's too strict, and she thinks I'm too lenient. I don't see how we could ever agree on anything about our kids."



Sound familiar? If so, here are some suggestions.

- Agree to disagree. Discuss your ideas, thoughts, and feelings about parenting when the children aren't around.
- Do not interfere with what the other parent is doing at the moment, provided it is not physically or emotionally abusive.
- Shut off the "I'm right, you're wrong" way of thinking.
- Appreciate individual parenting strengths.
- Don't complain to the children about your spouse and expect them to see your point.
- If your children "tattle" on the other parent, suggest they address the issue with that parent.



Planning Ahead

- Take parenting classes. Many parents lack skills and information that can be



readily picked up in these classes.

- Make clear what you want from your partner instead of expecting him or her to read your mind.

What Children Learn

Children see their parents as the leaders and role models in the family and come to learn that there are ways to work out differences cooperatively and with respect.



What Parents Learn

Once parents are able to value their differences and learn to work with them, there will be positive feelings and shared responsibility in the co-parenting relationship.



Judy Acosta is the school psychologist for Parker Farms School. She has been practicing school psychology for 19 years and has helped parents and teachers with academic and behavioral issues. She welcomes e-mail at jacosta@wallingford.k12.ct.us

Parker Farms Library Books That Reinforce the Trustworthiness Character Pillar



PICTURE BOOKS

Doctor DeSoto by W. Steig. Dr. DeSoto and his wife, both mice, assist animals with their dental needs. One day a fox comes to them in such great pain

that they agree to treat his rotten tooth. When it becomes clear that the fox intends to eat them when the job is done, the DeSotos come up with a brilliant plan.

The Biggest Bear by L. Ward. Johnny brings home a playful and lovable bear cub that soon grows into a huge bear and becomes a nuisance to his family and the neighbors.

Andy and the Lion by J. Daugherty. In this retelling of Androcles and the Lion, Andy meets a lion on the way to school and wins his friendship for life by removing a thorn from his paw.

CHAPTER BOOKS

A Cricket in Times Square by G. Selden. After Chester, a cricket, arrives in the Times Square subway station via a picnic basket from his native Connecticut, he takes up residence in the Bellini's newsstand. There, the tiny creature is lucky enough to find three good friends: a boy named Mario, a fast-talking Broadway mouse named Tucker and his pal, Harry the Cat.

Summer Wheels by E. Bunting. The Bicycle Man fixes up old bikes in Mrs. Pirelli's garage and lends them out to the neighborhood kids for free. There are just two rules: 'Have it back by four' and 'If it breaks while you have it, you fix it'. But will the new kid have trouble keeping the rules?



From the office of Mrs. Kosma, Nurse and Mrs. Moore, C.N.A.



With flu season here, it is important to take precautions to prevent the spread of illness. Good hygiene and a preventative vaccination along with other important measures help people stay healthy during the season.

Influenza, commonly known as the flu is a respiratory illness. Symptoms include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, stuffy/runny nose and muscle aches. Children may also experience nausea, vomiting and diarrhea but these symptoms are less common in adults.



The flu is spread when a person, who has the flu virus coughs, sneezes or speaks and sends the flu virus into

the air and other people breathe it in. The virus enters the person's body through the nose, throat, or lungs and begins to multiply causing the symptoms of the flu. It can also be spread when a person touches a surface, like a doorknob or desk, which has the flu virus on it but this is not the most common way of contracting the flu.

The single best way to prevent the spread of the flu is to get vaccinated, but practicing good health habits will help to prevent the spread of the flu, too. Frequent hand-washing with soap and warm/hot water and rubbing hands vigorously for 10-30 seconds is very important.



Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing is another good habit. Since the flu virus can live for hours, doctors suggest that if a tissue isn't handy, sneeze or cough into your sleeve. Keep your distance when speaking to people, avoiding close contact with someone who is sick and staying home from work or school when you are sick to prevent others from getting sick.

Don't share or reuse water bottles since the bottles can accumulate germs. However, the drinking of fluids is essential to everyone's health. Eight ounces of fluids is recommended daily. Eating vitamin-enriched foods such as fruits, vegetables, milk, eggs, and fish also help to keep our immune system strong helping to prevent illness.



Despite all your efforts, you may still develop the flu this season. If you do, it is important to get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids. There are medications that can be taken to relieve symptoms of the flu. Do not give children with flu-like symptoms aspirin as it can increase the risk of the development of Reyes Syndrome. There are some prescriptions anti-viral medications that can be taken within 36-48 hours of the development of flu symptoms. These medications will decrease flu symptoms allowing you to return to your normal routine faster. Contact your doctor to see if you are able to use these medications.

Remember that an ounce of prevention will keep you healthy this flu season.



From the office of Ms. Mongeon and Mrs. Tancredi

Attendance: Please remember to call your child out of school when he/she is going to be absent at 294-6200. We have a 24-hour answering machine to take your calls anytime of day. Please leave the student's name, teacher's name, and reason for absence.

Lunch orders for tardy students: Students who are



going to be tardy should also be called in at 294-6200. Leave the same information as above and order a lunch, if needed. Our lunch is prepared at Sheehan and we call our count in by 9:30.

Student Changes: It is the parents' responsibility to keep telephone numbers and addresses up-to-date with the school office. If you have moved or a number has changed please send a note with your child or call the school.

Picture Retake Day: Student's who need pictures and/or retakes done will be able to do so on **Monday, November 23, 2009** starting at 9:00AM.



PTAC

Parent Teacher Advisory Council

Why

The purpose of this council is to advise the principal on all matters related to the operation of the school with the exception of personnel issues.

The counsel makes suggestions on budget, curriculum, instruction, facilities, student assessment, new programs and additional staffing requests.

Who represents parents:

Mrs. Lori Hoelscher – Parent
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When

January 27, 2010
April 28, 2010

Where

We meet in the library of the school and parents are always welcome or you can contact a parent representative to address your concerns.

