

# KENNEDY NEWSLETTER



## PRINCIPAL MESSAGE

Dear Kennedy Family,

As we dive deeper into the school year, I'd like to take a moment to focus on an important theme: fostering kindness and helping our children get along with one another. Positive relationships are essential for our students' social and emotional development, and your support at home can make a significant difference!

### Why Kindness Matters

Kindness is the foundation of strong friendships. It helps children feel connected and valued, boosting their confidence and happiness. By promoting kindness, we create a supportive school environment where everyone feels welcome.

### Tips for Encouraging Kindness at Home

**Model Kindness:** Show your children how to be kind through your own actions. Whether it's helping a neighbor or being polite to a cashier; let them see how small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

**Discuss Kind Acts:** Talk about what kindness looks like and share examples from your day. Ask your children about kind things they've done or witnessed at school.

### Building Friendships

**Encourage Teamwork:** Engage your child in group activities at home, like cooking or board games, where they can practice sharing and collaboration.

**Support Inclusive Play:** Teach your child to include others in games and activities. Discuss how it feels to be left out and the importance of inviting everyone to join in.

**Help with Conflict Resolution:** Guide your child through resolving disagreements. Encourage them to listen, express their feelings, and find a solution together.

Thank you for your continued support in teaching our children the value of kindness and friendship. Together, we can create a nurturing environment where every child feels loved and accepted.

Warm regards,  
Shelly VanVoorst



In this edition of our newsletter, we are excited to introduce Leah Antal, one of our dedicated teachers who has been inspiring students for 26 years across all grades from preschool to 6th. Since she was just seven years old, Leah dreamed of becoming a teacher, a passion that has remained strong throughout her life. Her favorite subject to teach is math, which she finds not only fun but also incredibly rewarding.

One of her greatest joys in teaching is building meaningful relationships with her students and their families, and she treasures those moments when her students experience that “lightbulb” moment of understanding.

Outside of the classroom, Leah enjoys crafting, reading, and exploring the great outdoors through walking and hiking. She has been happily married to her husband, Paul, for 31 years, and they are proud parents of four children—Taylor, Noah, Heather, and Griffen—who range in age from 21 to 27 and are all graduates of MAPS, now living in Vermont, New York, and Michigan. An interesting tidbit about Leah: she is the youngest of seven siblings and even spent a summer in Japan teaching English.

Her fondness for owls began when she chose one as a symbol for her classroom, associating it with wisdom. This connection deepened as students began gifting her owl-themed items, leading to a cherished collection that former students love to revisit. We are grateful to have such a passionate and devoted teacher as Leah in our school community!



**Sunday, November 3 is Daylight Savings—remember to set your clocks back one hour!**



“Are you a Michigan parent or guardian? Interested in winning a \$25 gift card? Simply fill out this short survey about literacy skills and programs! You must be a parent/guardian of a child ages 0-10 to participate.

The survey is being administered as part of a statewide early literacy media campaign funded by 35i funds through the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential.

[Link Here](#)