

# KENNEDY NEWSLETTER



Dear Families,

As the winter holiday season approaches, we want to take a moment to reflect on the joy, warmth, and love that this time of year celebrates. It is a season filled with opportunities to slow down, cherish time with family and friends, and celebrate the values of peace and kindness.

The holidays offer a wonderful chance to nurture the qualities of love, empathy, and togetherness. Whether through the traditions we hold dear or the new ones we create together, this is a time to strengthen the bonds that connect us to the people who matter most, breathe in slowly, and enjoy those closest to us.

This holiday season, I encourage everyone to take a deep breath and reflect on what it means to live with peace in our hearts and homes. Peace isn't just about the absence of conflict—it's about being calm, understanding, and compassionate with others. Our school has been working on helping students recognize how they can contribute to peace both in the classroom and in their community, and I hope this spirit of peace will extend into your homes over the holiday break and beyond.

The holidays are also a time to celebrate love in all its forms—love for family, friends, and even the world around us. It's about showing appreciation, offering support, and spreading joy wherever we go. I encourage you to share these moments with your children by participating in activities that foster love and kindness, such as making handmade gifts or cards or simply spending quality time together.

I hope you enjoy the traditions that make this season special for your family. Whether it's putting out decorations, enjoying holiday meals, or finding a quiet moment to reflect on the year, these simple practices help create lasting memories and teach children the value of time spent with loved ones.

As we close out the year, thank you for your continued support in fostering a positive, caring, and inclusive community at our school and also for making me feel so accepted at Kennedy. I wish each of you a peaceful and loving holiday season filled with moments of joy and connection. May this time with your family and friends renew your spirits and bring you closer together.

Warmly,

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Shelly VanVoorst

12/7/2024 - 5:30 pm. Victorian Sleighbell Parade.  
12/11/2024 - 7:30pm - 5th grade Band Concert @ MMHS  
12/16/2024 - 12:15pm - 5th grade Movie @ The Vogue  
12/17 & 12/18 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm - Book Fair @ MMHS  
12/17/2024 - 9 am - 4th grade Movie @ The Vogue  
12/18 6pm - 3rd grade Holiday Sing  
12/18 7 pm - 4th grade Holiday Sing  
12/20/2024 - 3rd grade Movie @ The Vogue  
12/20/2024 - Last day of school before break

## STAFF HIGHLIGHT



Tristan Baller, a passionate and dedicated educator, was inspired to become a teacher by a special experience from his own childhood. “When I was in 4th and 5th grade, I had a teacher who completely changed my perspective on education,” he recalls. “She made learning so enjoyable, and it really opened my eyes to how a teacher can positively impact a student’s life. I wanted to be that teacher who gives every kid the love and support they need to succeed.”

Now in his second full year of teaching, Tristan has found his passion in teaching social studies. “I’ve always loved history—especially world wars, civil wars, and ancient civilizations. My dad and I used to watch history documentaries together, and that connection to the past has stayed with me.” For Tristan, the most rewarding part of teaching is building relationships with his students. “I love having fun with the kids, being a positive role model, and just creating a space where they feel supported and valued.” Outside of the classroom, Tristan enjoys hanging out with his two dogs, kayaking, golfing, and pretty much any sport. He also has a soft spot for scary movies and Scooby-Doo.

“One interesting fact about me,” he adds with a laugh, “is that I can’t swim at all. When I try, I sink!” Despite this, Tristan’s passion for teaching and his ability to connect with his students make him a standout educator.