
Jefferson Journal

Principally Speaking

February 2024

When one thinks of February, we often think of Valentines Day and the meaning of showing that extra love towards all who mean something in our life. But to me, there is a week that is more important during this month that is starting to catch speed. That is Random Acts of Kindness week, February 11-17. It is an opportunity to seize an entire week and be kind to others through your actions and words.

If you have seen the movie "WONDER" or better yet, read the book, the author Trudy Ludwig states:

Every minute of every day we make choices in how we treat others we encounter in life. We can choose to be kind or we can choose to be cruel.

Kindness does matter. Rather than focusing on our differences—whether subtle or obvious—we need to instead focus on what we do have in common with each other. The bottom line here is that we have more similarities with one another than differences. We are all capable of doing better and being better in how we treat one another. It's simply a matter of choice as to how we proceed. **Choose kind**

<https://choosekind.tumblr.com/>

Sincerely,
John J. Decker
john.decker@k12.sd.us

Special Points of Interest:

- ☺ Feb 7th - PTO meeting @ Noon @ Jefferson
- ☺ Feb 15th - 12:20 dismissal for Conferences
- ☺ Feb 15th - District/ Parent conferences 1:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- ☺ Feb 16th - No school
- ☺ Feb 19th - President's Day- NO school
- ☺ Feb 28th- Inservice 12:20 dismissal



Remember to wear your hat, mittens, coat, boots, and snow pants every day. Don't forget to bring your tennis shoes for physical education class.



Kids Heart Challenge- <https://nclvm.com/81rx>

The most important muscle in your body is your heart. But it can often be the most neglected. Personally, my dad suffered heart attacks and strokes because of a bad heart. As I grew up, I discovered that I had atrial fibrillation, which now results in me taking medication to prevent strokes and heart attacks from happening. Two of my own children have been diagnosed with heart conditions. Research has led to new methods of correction and solutions to correct heart defects. Our involvement in the Kids Heart Challenge has led us to raising over \$9000. This is well above our original goal of \$5000. Our students have earned a GLOW party in PE class. Because our students raised \$7000, Mr. Heiser and myself (possibly some surprise guests) will be the contestants of the DUNK tank at the end -of-the year picnic. For every \$50 raised by a student, they will receive a DUNK TANK ticket to be used to try and dunk Mr. Heiser and others. BUT WAIT, because the students raised \$9000, for every \$50 raised by a student, they will receive a PIE TICKET to throw at Mr. Heiser, Mr. Decker, or other staff members at an ALL school assembly. IF we raise \$12000, Mr. Heiser will sleep on top of the school for a night!! We can do it!

At the time of print, 137 students have registered, 25 students have completed Finn's Mission and 34 families have learned CPR. You are APPRECIATED! Thank you for your investment!





CHARACTER TRAIT of the MONTH- **FAIRNESS**

Fairness is one of the most difficult Pillars of Character to define clearly. People often see decisions that help them as being "fair" and those that do not as being unfair.

Fairness is often a matter of perception. Although some decisions are clearly unfair, the fact is there is usually more than one fair choice.

- play by the rules
- take turns and share
- be open-minded and listen to others
- don't take advantage of others
- don't blame others carelessly

Social Skills of the Month

(Jan. 22- Feb. 2)

Listening

1. Look at the person who is talking and remain quiet
2. Wait until the person is through talking before you speak
3. Show that you heard them by nodding your head, saying "Okay"

(Feb. 5 – Feb. 23)

Making an Apology

1. Look at the person
2. Use a serious, sincere voice.
3. Say, "I'm sorry for" or "I want to apologize for"
4. Explain how to plan to do better in the future
5. Say, "Thanks for listening"

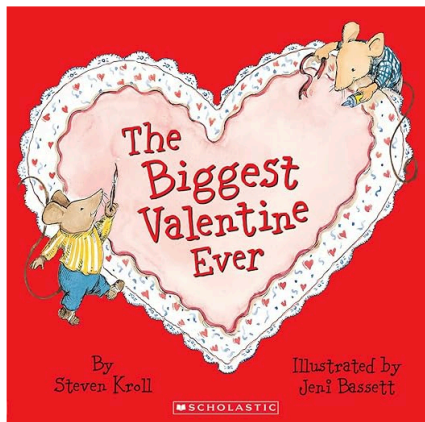
(Feb. 26- Mar. 8)

Talking with Others (Having a Conversation)

1. Look at the person
2. Use a clear, pleasant voice
3. Listen to what the other person says
4. When there is a break in the conversation, ask a question or share your thoughts



SCHOLASTIC Book of the Month: **The Biggest Valentine Ever**
by Steven Kroll



When Mrs. Mousely asks her class to make valentines, Clayton and Desmond decide to make one together and give it to their teacher as a surprise. But things don't go as planned. First Clayton puts too much glitter on the card. Then Desmond puts on too many hearts. Soon the friends are arguing and they rip the card in half. They both say "I'm going to make my own valentine!" and go home in a huff. But then Desmond and Clayton realize that by working together they can make the biggest, best valentine ever!

Parent Resource Sites:



[ParentGuidance.org](https://www.parentguidance.org)



<https://www.pbs.org/parents>



**FREE ONLINE
TUTORING FOR
K-12 STUDENTS**

[https://ourdakotadreams.com/
elementary-middle-school/
online-tutoring/](https://ourdakotadreams.com/elementary-middle-school/online-tutoring/)

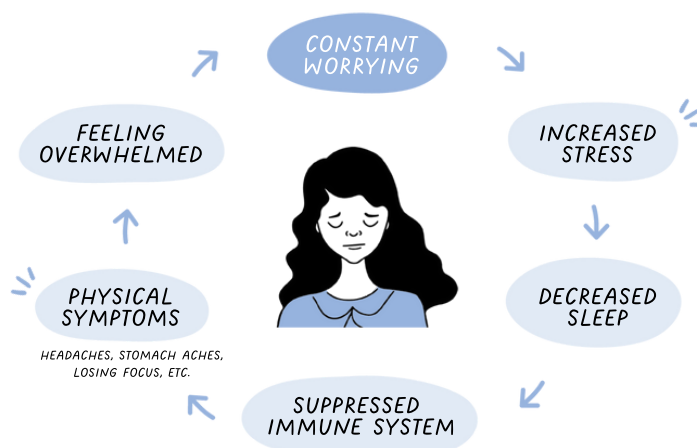


<https://sdsfec.org/>



TEACH YOUR CHILD TO TURN THEIR WORRY INTO "I WONDER"

Occasional worry is ok. But when **worrying becomes a habit**, it can have serious health effects on your child. When your child learns to turn their worries into "I wonder"... their mental and physical health improves and they become **more resilient**.



BREAK THE CYCLE BY HELPING YOUR CHILD TURN THEIR WORRY INTO "I WONDER"...

⚡ WORRY ⚡

"I will feel embarrassed if I screw this up."

"I won't know anyone and will have no one to talk to."

"This is going to be too hard for me."

"I don't want to ask a question because I feel stupid for not knowing this."

"I won't have any friends in the new school."

"I'm just not good at anything."

⚡ WONDER ⚡

→ "I wonder what will happen if I try this and give it my best!"

→ "I wonder if I can make some new friends or meet someone cool if I go."

→ "I wonder if this will help me learn a new skill!"

→ "I wonder if others have the same question as I do. They would be thankful I asked."

→ "I wonder how many kids have the same interests that I do."

→ "I know everyone has unique talents and abilities. I wonder what mine are."



Five Ways to Talk with Your Kids so They Feel Loved

Ever look at your child and wonder, “Where did you come from?” ? Maybe they don’t look like you or act like you or they’ve seemed to change in some way. We often have to let go of our expectations for our children and students to see who they actually are becoming.

Beginning when children are as young as newborns, the way we interact with them helps shape how they respond to us and to other people in their lives. In her book entitled, *Creating Compassionate Kids; Essential Conversations to have With Young Children*, Shauna Tominey writes about how important it is to communicate and converse with kids in ways that help them develop compassion and resilience. By paying attention we let them know they are loved for who they are and help them trust the adults in their lives. It is our responsibility to teach them appropriate skills in managing their emotions, challenges and interactions with others. Tominey gives these 5 examples of those important conversations.

1. YOU ARE LOVED FOR WHO YOU ARE AND WHO YOU WILL BECOME

Build the relationship with your child by spending uninterrupted and focused time with them doing something they choose. Pay attention to their likes, interests and how they may grow or change over time. “It’s fun to see how your interests are changing as you get older!”

Letting your children know that you SEE them is very important to developing a trusted relationship and secure attachment or the strength of the bond between a child and their primary care-taker. Children who have secure attachment tend to have healthy self-esteem, better self-control, strong critical thinking skills, appropriate social skills and better academic performance.

2. YOUR FEELINGS HELP YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

Just like adults, children have uncomfortable feelings that are often expressed in unpleasant ways like yelling, tantrums and other challenging behaviors. Our feelings serve a purpose. In our classroom Second Step lessons we teach children to recognize clues that their bodies give them when they are having strong feelings or are uncomfortable in some way. We can teach them to pay attention to those clues and what to do to calm down and resolve the issue i.e., “Right now you are whining and I can’t understand you. Take some deep breaths and talk to me in a big girl/boy voice and I can try to help you solve the problem.”

3. THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

“It’s okay to feel frustrated but it’s not okay to scream at anyone or hit them.” As children grow older, no one wants them to express themselves in harmful or inappropriate ways but they must be taught. Talk to your children about what is acceptable and expected behaviors and what is not. Then be sure to model and practice what you preach.

4. EVERYONE IS A LEARNER AND MAKING MISTAKES IS PART OF LEARNING

Rarely does a person’s abilities just come naturally. By teaching children that it is natural to feel frustrated when learning to do something challenging and that they should keep trying and practicing to get better. There are an increasing number of children that are perfectionists. They believe that if they can’t do something challenging right away or after a few tries that they are ‘stupid’ or somehow less than those than able to. By highlighting a child’s effort more than the outcome children become more resilient and are able to persevere in tough situations. “You tied your shoes! I noticed that it was hard at first but you didn’t give up and kept trying and now you can do it all by yourself!” Again, this is an area that as adults we need to model.

5. YOUR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ARE TRYING TO BE THE BEST PARENTS THEY CAN BE

What a shock it would be if your teenager came to you saying, “I was thinking about last night when I got mad and yelled. I shouldn’t have done that and I’m sorry. I was just upset when I couldn’t take the car and I lost it.” People do not develop these skills unless they see others modeling them. Children don’t learn to take responsibility for their actions if no one has taught them or expected them to.

Everyone has success stories and less than successful stories when dealing with children. It is important to remember that the struggles you have as an adult may be the same kind of struggles that your child has. The way we interact with our children and students does shape how they interact with the world and lets them know if you are a trusted adult in their life.



DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Watertown School District 14-4

Early Childhood



SCREENING INFORMATION ★

- Developmental Screenings are for children ages 3-5 years old
- They must reside in the Watertown School District
- Screenings are conducted for potential delays in speech/language, motor, cognitive, and social/emotional development
- Must schedule an appointment
- Screenings will be held at Mellette Elementary School



SCREENING DATES:

September 22, 2023
November 17, 2023
January 26, 2024
March 8, 2024



CONTACT INFORMATION

To schedule an appointment please call Kara at (605) 882-6350

Consistent with Federal and State regulations, the Watertown School District engages in ongoing "Child Find" services to locate, identify, and evaluate all students with disabilities residing within its jurisdiction, age birth through 21 inclusive.



PRESCHOOL

SCREENING

This screening is for children who reside in Watertown and turn 4 on or before September 1, 2024.

Screenings will take place at Mellette Elementary on Friday, March 8, and Friday, March 22.

Appointments are required!

Scan the QR code to schedule your appointment.



PLEASE BRING YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE TO YOUR APPOINTMENT.

Please call 605-882-6398 if you need assistance or have any questions.



KINDERGARTEN



ROUND UP

APRIL 4 & 5, 2024

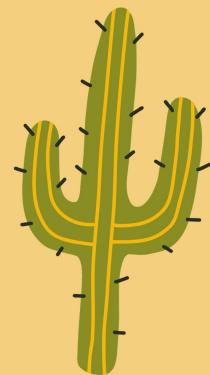


Kindergarten Round-Up is for children in the Watertown School District who will be 5 years of age on or before September 1, 2024. This is the registration process for children going into all-day Kindergarten or Jr. Kindergarten and will include a short screener.

Screenings will take place at Roosevelt Elementary on Thursday, April 4, and Friday, April 5, 2024.

Appointments are required! Scan the QR code to schedule your appointment.

Please bring your child's birth certificate and vaccination records to your appointment.



Call 605-882-6398 if you need assistance or have any questions.



Jefferson Elementary PTO Agenda
December 6, 2023

1. PTO Mission

"The mission of Jefferson Elementary PTO is to develop a closer connection between school and home by encouraging parent involvement; enhance the educational experience by supporting academic and enrichment activities; and improve the environment at Jefferson Elementary by providing volunteer and financial support."

2. Introductions/Sign up Sheet

a. Administrative Items

- i. Review Checkbook balance: **Current Balance (before pizza and popcorn): \$10,967.06**
 - i. Outstanding bills:
 - ii. Need Nacho Supplies invoice to be paid-Popcorn bill has been paid
 - iii. Pizza invoice from school to pay
 - iv. Laurie is reimbursing teachers as she gets the receipts (100\$/certified teacher)

Past Events

1. Jaguar Gear: Poster on Bulletin Board, FB post, and link sent out school wide to shop store, flyer sent home. Store closes December 31, 2023 – **sent a FB post out before the cutoff to ensure receiving product by Christmas**

2. National Education Week: Apple Delivery Recap

3. Turkey Bingo Recap:

- a. Setup: Organized, had plenty of help, They set up for 500 this year.
- b. Food: Leftovers: Pizza: 4 pizzas-sold for 10\$ each, a box of candy and 1 full ring pop left, no baked goods leftover, 3 -4 bags of popcorn was given away
[We actually ordered 10 more pizzas from our original order and the 4 pizzas were all that were left and got sold. All of the chips and cheese sold out. We also need to remember the weather last year was not great and this year was really good!]
- c. Raffles: Went well to do at 7pm
- d. Game: Ran long, started 15 minutes late[-More people to help count money and get people into the building.] Should have did every game once then regular bingo. Went off last years games and took longer to win.
- e. Stacey/Caller: some people felt she went to fast and was hard to understand a few letters. She wanted someone next to her so all she had to do was to be told what to do and call.
- **Next year, Decker will do the drawing and hand to announcer to read off – should go faster and be more organized that way**
- f. Communication: Texted each other.
- g. Ham/Turkeys: Could do with less since had 10 real games. Drew names of Jefferson staff for unclaimed turkeys.
- h. Wasn't lack of trying, was lack of businesses wanting to donate. Lots of no's this year!
- **Was brought up that in the past, they sent out a notice to families of Jefferson students asking if they want to donate money, gifts, or put together a gift basket. Was successful back then – maybe try this next year?**
- **Could do a SUG for parents to sign up for the gift donations**
- i. Expenses/profit made? Laurie still needs Nacho supplies and pizza invoice and will give exact amounts.
- j. Turkey Bingo next year? Carnival? Need to vote so can secure for next year.-



- The carnival uses a lot of resources and staff, and there isn't as big a profit margin as Turkey Bingo. Discussed moving the date away from the end of the year – this would help with business donors, since so many had already done their spending for the year when asked. There is also a lot going on in November, so it might help spread out the events.

4. Staff reimbursements are due December 31, 2023

New Agenda:

1. Staff Christmas Gift
 - a. Budget
 - b. Ideas/wants from the teachers/staff
 - c. Laurie and Kylie input from experience from conference meals
 - i. Laurie: have heard ice maker and tea kettle pot
 - a. **Did both the kettle and the ice maker – totaled about \$200**
2. Randy/Dave Appreciation Gift: Need amt/place (last year Dakota Butcher)
-did \$100 each at Dakota Butcher – Lona will pick up
3. SUG for treats (sweet/salty) to be brought in for staff the week of Dec. 18.
-SUG was mostly full
4. All about the staff posters out on bulletin boards and Facebook page. 1st Grade is up.
5. Yearbook: Remind teachers to get all pictures in drive
 - a. How is this coming along? **Lona will check with Taylor**
 - b. Every teacher knows how and where to put? **Yes, about half the staff has added at least one photo, per Mr. Decker**

Administrative Report (Mr. Decker)

- A.
- B.

Monthly Items

1. Teacher Requests-Mrs. Stemwedel has a request - **approved**
2. PTO input?

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 at Noon. Bring your own lunch.

PTO Events:

August: Open House, Open House Lunch for Teachers, 1st Day of School Muffins/Drinks for Teachers, Picture Day helpers

September: Homecoming Bakesale, Homecoming Float

November: Teacher meal for Conferences, National Education Week: Apples, Turkey Bingo

December: Staff Christmas Gifts (Last Year was Air fryer, aluminum foil, and coffee)

February: Conference Meal, Dr. Seuss Birthday (**will celebrate Feb 26-Mar 1, since his birthday is on a Saturday this year**)

March: Movie Night, Yearbook

April: Talent Show, Yearbook continued

May: Teacher Appreciation, Teacher Retirement Gifts, End of Year Party



Child Find Notice

The Watertown School District has an ongoing “Child Find” system, which is designated to locate, identify and evaluate any child residing within its geographical boundaries who may have a disability and be in need of Special Education or 504 services. This includes children who are not in school; those who are in public, private, or home school; those who are highly mobile such as children who are migrant or homeless; and those who are advancing from grade to grade, who may need but are not receiving Special Education or 504 services.

The Watertown School District will make sure any child enrolled in its district who qualifies for Special Education or 504 services will be no cost to the parents of the child.

If you know of a child who lives within the boundaries of the Watertown School District, who may have a disability, and may need but is not receiving Special Education or 504 services, please contact Dr. Jennifer Heath, Director of Special Services, at 882-6398.

“Child Find” activities will continue throughout the school year. As part of these efforts the Watertown School District will use screening information, student records, and basic assessment information it collects on all children in the district to help locate those children who have a disability and need Special Education or 504 services. Any information the district collects through “Child Find” is maintained confidentially.

Notice of Non-discrimination

The Watertown School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Dr. Jeff Daniels, Superintendent
P.O. Box 730, Watertown, SD 57201
605-882-6312

Derek Barrios, Assistant Superintendent
P.O. Box 730, Watertown, SD 57201
605-882-6312

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, see list of Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforcement offices for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-(800)-421-3481.



FREE Tax Return Preparation

Two Options Offered by Lake Area Tech

Option 1: In-Person at LATC VITA Tax Site

- **No income limit**
- **Tax preparation service is free** and is provided for taxpayers whose tax return is within scope for VITA tax preparers as set by the IRS
- **DATES/TIMES for WALK-IN TAX PREP:**
- Jan. 30 - March 9, 2024, on Tuesdays (12–3pm), Thursdays (12–3pm & 5–8pm) & Saturdays (9am–12pm)
- **PLACE:** Lake Area Tech **Room 205** (use door 2 or 2A off of 11th Street NE)
- **WHAT TO BRING:**
 1. Photo ID for primary taxpayer (and spouse)—required by IRS
 2. Social Security cards for **everyone** on your return—required by IRS
 3. Tax forms and other tax information you have received
 4. Copy of last year's tax return
 5. Checking/savings account information for direct deposit of refund
 6. VITA Info: www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers



Option 2: Facilitated Self-Assist (FSA)

- **Income limit: \$79,000**
- **Absolutely free** for taxpayers who wish to **self-prepare their return** using the IRS-provided link to the online software.
- This option also includes the opportunity to **ask questions of our IRS-certified tax preparers** during tax site hours. We are able to help with any questions that are within the scope of the IRS VITA program.
- We do not see your tax return or income information and your return is **not** quality reviewed by our volunteers.
- **For more information or to receive the link** to create an account to self-prepare, please send an email to taxlink@lakeareatech.edu.

**For more information, join
our Facebook page: @LATVITATaxPrep**

**Questions? Email
Lorna.Hofer@lakeareatech.edu**



February 2024

Menu is subject to change according to availability of product – check online menu for updates

*Fruit and Milk(11g,19g) is offered at ALL Breakfast Meals.

*Veggie Bar, Fruit Selection and Milk Selection(11g,19g) are offered on ALL Lunch meals!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Breakfast: Mini Bagels (42g), Yogurt (19g) Lunch: Chicken Alfredo - Breadstick – 17g Strawberry Cup – 21g	2 Breakfast: Blueberry Bread (45g), String Cheese Lunch: Chili – 25g Cinnamon Roll – 33g	3
4	5 Breakfast: Poptart (76g), String Cheese Lunch: Chicken Patty Sandwich – 45g Baked Beans – 30g	6 Breakfast: Mini John (12g, 28g), Yogurt (19g) Lunch: Walking Taco – 20g, 28g Assorted Toppings Peach Cup – 21g	7 Breakfast: Pancake Bites (15g, 20g) Lunch: Cheeseburger – 29g Fries – 20g	8 Breakfast: Cinni Mini (40g), Go-gurt (8g) Lunch: Breaded Chicken – 26g Fried Rice – 27g Orange Sauce (optional) Fortune Cookie	9 Breakfast: Breakfast Sandwich (27g) Lunch: Hot Dog - Mac & Cheese – 19g Sidekick – 22g	10
11	12 Breakfast: Muffin (32g), String Cheese Lunch: Pizza – 29g Green Beans – 4g	13 Breakfast: Funnel Cake, Go-gurt Lunch: Lasagna Roll Ups - Garlic Toast – 12g Strawberry Cup – 21g	14 Breakfast: Breakfast Pizza (22g) Lunch: Italian Dunkers – 34g, 51g Marinara Sauce – 10g Corn – 17g	15 Early Out Breakfast: Pancake (13g), Sausage Lunch: Wow Butter Sandwich – Deli Sandwich – 29g Chips – 24g Apple Slices – 19g	16 NO SCHOOL	17
18	19 NO SCHOOL	20 Breakfast: French Toast (37g), Sausage Lunch: Super Nachos – 21g, 31g Refried Beans – 18g	21 Breakfast: Benefit Bar (47g), Yogurt (19g) Lunch: Chicken Nuggets – 16g Baked Beans – 30g Dinner Roll – 17g	22 Breakfast: Cinnamon Roll (17g, 33g), Egg Lunch: Hamburger – 29g Fries – 13g	23 Breakfast: Muffin (32g), Go-gurt (8g) Lunch: Pancake – 13g/26g Omelet – Sidekick – 22g	24
25	26 Breakfast: Cereal Bar (28g), String Cheese Lunch: BBQ Sandwich – 29g Fries – 18g	27 Breakfast: Mini Donuts (20g, 26g), Egg Lunch: Popcorn Chicken – 14g Carrots – 5g Treat	28 Early Out Breakfast: Waffle (36g), Sausage Lunch: Hot Ham & Cheese Sandwich – 29g Chips – 24g Apple Slices – 19g	29 Breakfast: Mini Bagels (42g), Yogurt (19g) Lunch: Chicken Cubes w/ gravy - Mashed Potatoes – 25g Dinner Roll – 17g		