



Ellicottville Elementary



December & January

Character Trait Focus
December – Generosity
January - Dedication



IMPORTANT DATES

<u>December 15</u>	<u>Grade 2 - 6 Winter Concert - 6:30</u> <u>Eagle Time at 1:45 - Host Gr. 1</u>
<u>December 20</u>	<u>Grade 4 Fieldtrip to Seneca Museum</u>
<u>December 21</u>	<u>First Day of Winter</u>
<u>December 23</u>	<u>NO SCHOOL - Winter Break Begins</u>
<u>January 3</u>	<u>Students Return</u>
<u>January 5</u>	<u>Ski Club Begins</u>
<u>January 16</u>	<u>NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King Jr. Day</u>
<u>January 19</u>	<u>Eagle Time - Host Gr. 4</u>
<u>January 26</u>	<u>Gr. 6 Moving Up Day</u>
<u>January 27</u>	<u>NO SCHOOL - Staff Development Day</u>

Communication and Information:

Message from our Principal, Mrs. Poulin:

Focusing on GRATITUDE, RESPECT, and CHARITY this holiday season and beyond.

The holiday season is upon us and creates a perfect time to teach young children important life lessons about **gratitude** that may extend throughout the year. Understanding gratitude can be tricky for children, who by their nature, tend to be self-focused. Talking with children about being thankful for not only material things, but for acts of kindness from others, is one way to help children develop the skill of being grateful. As children grow with gratitude, they become more understanding of the needs and feelings of others and become less self-centered.

So, how do we teach our children to be grateful? Try some of the following ideas.

- * **Be consistent.** Like all skills, gratitude is not learned in one lesson.
- * **Say no.** It is hard to teach gratitude to someone who gets everything they want.
- * **Tell your kids why you appreciate them.** Remind your children of your gratitude by using specific reasons. For example: *I appreciate the way you help your brother tie his shoes. I appreciate how you are trying to be more helpful with our morning routine.*
- * **Teach children to say thank you to everyone who does something for them.** - Say thank you to their sibling who helps them pick up toys, to their server at a restaurant or their friend who gives them a birthday gift. Thank you cards may seem outdated but are always appreciated by the receiver!
- * **Talk about the things you appreciate.** This can be done in many ways, from sharing thankful comments about family and food before a meal, to discussing something about the day to appreciate.

As mentioned above, gratitude is important to maintaining a happy heart. **Self-respect and respect** for others are key for practicing happiness. It is vital and healthy that we challenge our children to remain focused on the positives in their lives overall and in their classroom. Parents- we often hear the same name over and over when our son or daughter talks about being annoyed by that classmate that seems to be irritating to them. Respect can still be shown while setting clear boundaries and expressing displeasure. For example, when one child apologizes to another at school, we coach the child receiving the apology to NOT say, "That's ok" in a mousey voice. We encourage the child receiving the apology to say, "Please don't do that to me again, I didn't like that, and I expect that you won't do it again." We want to raise kind children but not "doormats." By using respectful assertiveness, one child may confidently state how he or she feels, without "putting down" the other child. Children who respectfully assert themselves stand up for their rights, decide how to handle a situation in a level-headed manner, and express to others that they will not be bullied. Some parents fear a respectful and compassionate child will be bullied or considered a "wimp" by other children. Parents- try to remember that children who are respectfully assertive are generally nobody's push-over and other children appreciate them for their respectful attitudes. Children and adolescents who are judged by peers as high in "character" (helpful, cooperative, sensitive to others' feelings) are among the most popular and successful in their schools and communities. Children who are esteemed by their peers are those who communicate clearly that they demand respect for themselves in a respectfully assertive manner. When confronted by a bully, a respectful child can assertively state his or her beliefs without using threats, name calling, or other put-down language. Children who have been bullied, may themselves bully later if we don't teach children to stand up for their own rights while still acknowledging the feelings of others. Using phrases like "please stop" or "I don't like it when you do that to me" will often command amazing respect. A child who can oppose "meanness" in a respectful, but firm, manner will enhance their own self-esteem and position among peers. Raising your child to be respectfully assertive is worth the effort. Being respectfully assertive one time isn't enough — encouraging respect is a 24-hour-a-day responsibility. Self-advocacy is more skill than instinct and it is teachable.

So, how do we teach our children to show respect? Try some of the following ideas.

***Self-advocacy must be practiced.** - Role play with your child how to tell a peer that they are not happy about something that is happening. Have them practice speaking up so when a situation arises, they are better prepared to speak up for themselves.

***Talk about what it means to show respect.** - Talk with your child about how it is not respectful or kind to point out a quality about another human being in a derogatory manner. (They are fat. They are dirty. They smell funny.) If they say comments that are unkind it is disrespectful. If they hear others say disrespectful comments and don't speak up, they too are being disrespectful.

***Be a role model for your child.** - Avoid making derogatory comments about others in front of your child.

We often think of charity during holiday seasons. May we not only be charitable with the ones that look and think like us, but also show kindness to the ones who are nothing like us? It can seem natural to want to extend a helping hand to those who seem needy and helpless, but it can be much harder to extend that same helping hand to those with whom we don't see eye to eye. When someone comes into our small community group or social circle and speaks up about beliefs that may look nothing like our own, we are tempted to shut down or push back... but true community means engaging anyway. We aren't expected to build walls around our hearts when we get annoyed, but should rather try our best to share kindness and life together as a community.

So, how do we teach our children to be charitable? Try some of the following ideas.

*** Support a charitable event or organization.** Whether you are donating old toys, household items, clothes, or participating in a food drive, talk to children about what those actions mean to those who receive the kindness.

***Help neighbors.** Regularly engage in a service-oriented project. Shovel for an elderly neighbor. Bake cookies for a serviceman or servicewoman. Bake bread and deliver it to the homeless feeding station in your community.

***Base decisions on facts.** Engaging in gossip and simply accepting fake news are not only dangerous but show the opposite of charity. Talk with your child about making the effort to be an intelligent consumer of any information read or heard.



Message from the PTO:

Box Tops - The PTO will be mailing out Box Tops before the end of the month. Many Box Tops will expire 12/31/16 or 1/1/17 so please send those in. Please continue to save your Box Tops as we will have more contests throughout the year. You can always send your Box Tops in to the elementary office or drop them off at our two local drop off places, the Great Valley Post Office or TOPS in Ellicottville.

NEW!!! Box Tops recently created a new phone app that will help us to earn more Box Tops on certain items that we purchase.

Get involved!

Come find out what the PTO is doing and get involved. PTO continues to help K-12 students and the surrounding community. These activities can't be done without all of the volunteers! If you would like more information please feel free to attend any of our meetings or email Diana Olson at dolson@eville.wnyric.org.

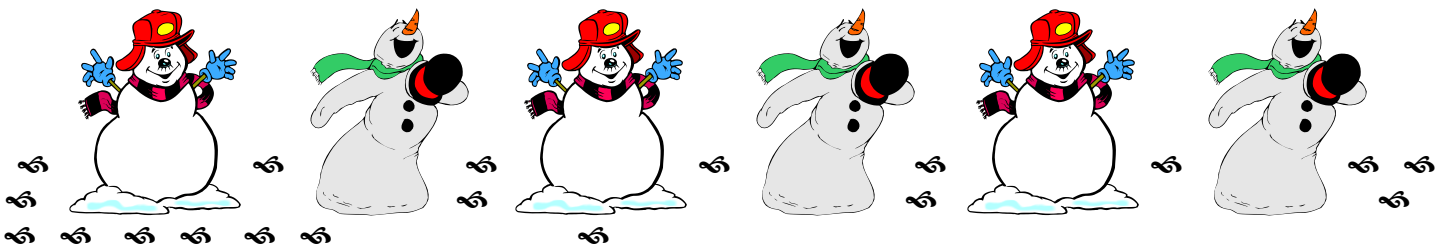
2016- 2017 Activities

- Lip Sync/Talent Show - Wednesday, February 15th (6:00)
- Dime Carnival - Friday, April 21st (5:30-7:30)
- Mother/Son Dance - Friday, May 12th (6:00)
- Science Exposition - Tuesday, May 16th (6:00 - 7:00)
- Spring Book Fair- Monday, May 15th and Tuesday, May 16th

PTO meetings for the remainder of the year are listed below:

- January 3rd
- February 7th
- March 14th
- April 7th - We will start at 3:00 right after school. This meeting will be dedicated to making baskets for the Chinese Auction at the Dime Carnival.
- May 2nd

****All of these meetings are at 4:30 in the Elementary Art Room.****



IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- CALL THE SCHOOL IF YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT - 699-2318.
- REMEMBER WHEN BRINGING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL, FOR SAFETY REASONS NO VEHICLES SHOULD PARK IN THE FRONT OF THE SCHOOL. PLEASE PARK IN THE ELEMENTARY PARKING LOT OR USE THE DROP OFF ZONE AREA. Observe the "No Parking This Side" signs for the safety of everyone.