

MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Superintendent of Schools

Community Message SY 21-22 No. 11

Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.

December 17, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff,

It warms my heart to know that our students are not only learning about different holiday celebrations this month but celebrating them all with passion and joy! Recently, Bradford 4th and 5th graders were treated to a wonderful presentation by Rabbi Nikki explaining the origins of Hanukkah as well as the themes and modern interpretation. Our schools have been finding creative ways to perform holiday classics with virtual and outdoor concerts like at Edgemont whose students gathered on the front steps to sing. Be sure to visit our [Twitter account @montclairschls](#), for photos and videos! And tonight, Hillside and Nishuane have paired up for a virtual Kwanzaa celebration that will feature a folktale story, drums and dancing.

Travel Guidance Correction

Please see the correction to the email that was sent yesterday per [CDC guidance](#) below:

*Unvaccinated individuals who do travel should get tested 1-3 days before their trip and 3-5 days after travel. Even if they test negative, the CDC recommends unvaccinated individuals stay home and self-quarantine for **7 days** after domestic travel, and for **10 days** if they are unable to test.*

Thank you in advance for letting your children's teachers and principal know that you will be traveling and your return date so we can prepare for virtual learning.

Outdoor Lunches/Tents

As I mentioned in my last update, our building principals are watching the weather daily to determine if students can eat lunch outdoors. One of the most important ways we can mitigate the spread of COVID is to stay outside as much as possible. Luckily we've had some milder conditions for December, but as an extra layer of protection against the elements, we have purchased large, heavy-duty, professionally-installed tents and they are operable at all of our elementary and middle schools. These tents will allow students to eat outdoors more comfortably during the winter months as they are equipped with sides to shield the wind.

Montclair Scholarship Fund (MSF)

MSF is seeking donations to help students in need have an opportunity to continue their education after high school. Help our students unlock their greatest potential by removing barriers for access and finding a pathway to college. No matter how much you give, every dollar counts.

- Make a donation [online](#)
- Increase the impact of your donation with a matching gift from your employer
- Contact MSF about creating an individualized scholarship

Short Story Contest

Friends of Anderson Park will hold its fourth annual short-story contest. All Montclair students in grades 6, 7 and 8 are eligible to enter. Stories are shared at a reading at Watchung Booksellers, and winners each receive \$100. The contest is judged by a panel of professional authors who live in Montclair. All fiction genres are welcome, but the story must incorporate Anderson Park in some way. [Entry requirements, deadline and other information.](#)

Season of Giving

Around the district our schools have been holding holiday gift, toy and coat drives for those less fortunate. Bullock fourth grader Jack Pitts along with his sisters Jayla, a third grader at CHB and Julianna, a preschooler at MCPK, completed his third annual neighborhood coat drive benefiting Toni's Kitchen. In total, Jack collected 64 coats, dozens of hats, gloves and snow pants and over 50 articles of warm children's clothing which he delivered that were made immediately available to those in need. Proud of Jack and all our families who have supported these wonderful causes.

As we close out 2021, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of our staff and our families who have remained supportive, focused and dedicated to providing our students with the best learning experience possible.

Warmest wishes to those celebrating Christmas and Kwanzaa next week and may everyone enjoy a safe, relaxing and joyous winter break! Happy New Year! See you in 2022!

Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent