



Northeast School Principal's Newsletter

March 22nd, 2024



Dr. Joseph A. Putrino, Jr.
jputrino@montclair.k12.nj.us

World Down Syndrome Day @ Northeast

On March 21st or 3.21 Northeast Elementary School participated in World Down Syndrome Day.

This global awareness day has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012.

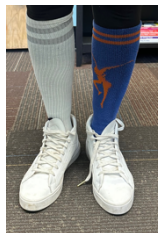
The date for WDSO being the 21st day of the 3rd month, was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome.

On Thursday students came in wearing their brightest most colorful mismatched socks! The idea was to start a conversation, so when people ask you about your socks you can tell them, "I'm wearing them to raise awareness of Down syndrome".



Additionally, the school was treated to a presentation in the morning conducted by two Northeast students; 5th grader Gianluca Di Benedetto, 3rd grader Max Di Benedetto and their sister Gabi who attends Glenfield Middle School in the 8th grade. Their focus was to raise awareness and help us all relate to a day in the life of an individual with Down syndrome. Luca, who has Down syndrome and is autistic, inspired his siblings to become advocates.

In their talk they defined Down syndrome and described traits associated with it. The audience was treated to a brief demonstration of some sign language that could be helpful when communicating with Luca and other students who are non-verbal. During a question-and-answer portion of the presentation, it was clear that our students had a sincere curiosity about Down syndrome. The safe environment we created allowed for students to learn more about their peer. At the end of our presentation, I was able to reference how easy it is for people to use differences to keep ourselves apart. I emphasized we should be using our differences to forge greater connections between us while recognizing and taking pride in our individualism.



Later in the day classrooms partook in activities related to our topic. Additionally, some classes were visited by our Teacher of the Deaf, Ms. Laura Lavin, who taught the alphabet in sign language. Below are the activities and I have included a link to more resources if you would like to continue this conversation at home.

<https://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/about-wdsd>

Color Chromosome Activity

This activity aims to show how we are unique, but we are all people, we all have things in common and we are all part of the school community.

Have students color their chromosomes any colors/design they choose. Then have students label their drawing with different physical traits about themselves. You may also have students share a few of these traits out loud with each other. This can be related back to how we are all human and yet have many similarities and differences.

Color Socks Activity

This activity aims to show how we are unique, but we are all people, we all have things in common and we are all part of the school community.

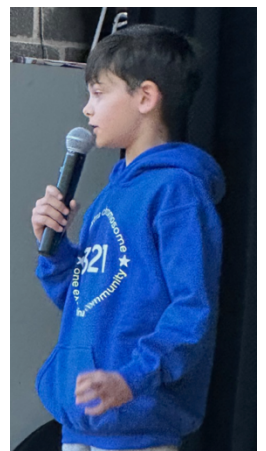
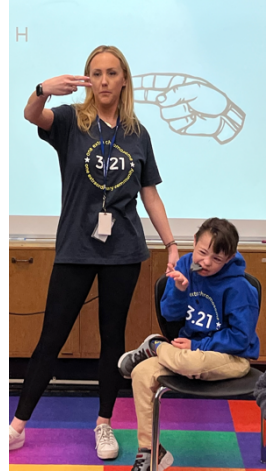
Have students color their socks any colors/design they choose. Then have students discuss the similarities and differences between the socks of their classmates. This can be related back to how we are all human and yet have many similarities and differences.

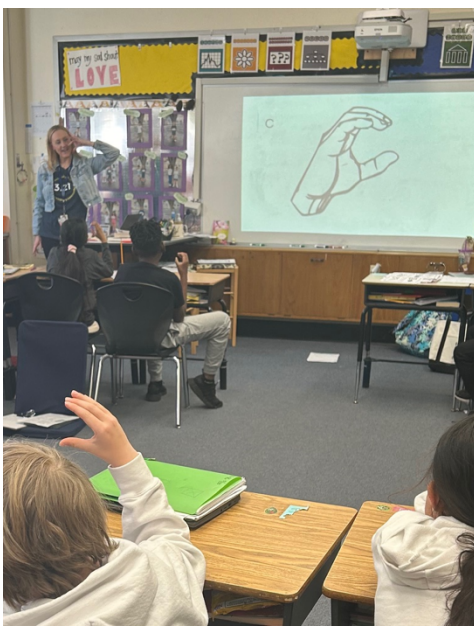
Together we can recognize how we fit into the world around us.

Northeast is always proud to foster belonging, diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

Thank you for supporting us.

Check out our article in the Montclair Local: <https://montclairlocal.news/2024/03/northeast-students-honor-world-down-syndrome-day/>





School Closed
Good Friday
March 29th