View Ridge OTTER KNOW
Friday, December 18th, 2020
This will be our last Otter Know for 2020

Para versión en español, de favor contactarse a Shannon Otto

Note from Your PTA Co-Presidents
Hello Families,

We want to express our gratitude to our community for attending meetings, sharing their experiences and perspectives, and most of all for listening. We know that these past few weeks have been hard, and we appreciate the attention and care that you have shown our school. We hope that all of you find some peace in the next few weeks over break and are able to rest and recharge a bit for the arrival of 2021.

Please note, the next DEI Committee meeting is Wednesday, 1/6 at 7pm. If you're unable to attend and/or want to know more, please contact dei@viewridgeschool.org.

While we pause meetings to spend time with our families during winter break, please know we continue to be here for you. If you need something, please reach out to president@viewridgeschool.org; dei@viewridgeschool.org; and viewridgedei@gmail.com.

Thank you and take good care,
Kathryn Lachenmaier & Megan Flaherty
VRE PTA Co-Presidents

Note from Principal Henn
Dear Families:

As I have stepped into this role as Interim Principal and thinking about the diverse perspectives that come through in reading communication I send out, I question who am I connecting, who am I alienating, who am I missing? It deepens my learning and widens my perspective on how we bring in different voices and perspectives. I wonder also about the words in the article that was about our school and question who was misrepresented, who was misquoted, who felt the words needed to be said? As I think about all these perspectives and have reflected more on how we restore and build upon the strengths of our school and community, I can't help but be optimistic and hopeful. I do believe energy breeds energy when a whole community comes together. This week when our equity PTA met, we had both View Ridge staff and parents present. Our energy snowballed into ideas on how we
can combine our PTA and school equity in similar mission statements, how to open conversations and dive deeper into awareness along with how we move forward in action. Rather than large community meetings, we started with a couple smaller meetings with families. In lieu of Coffee with the Principal, I will be looking at other ways we can meet in smaller groups to gain more voices.

In connection with View Ridge staff, we will continue to be life-long learners with your child at the center of our learning and in all the decisions we make moving forward. We have heard from so many of you how much you care about this community and the staff at View Ridge. That love and care is what will propel us forward in 2021. We will be excited to start up the work, joy and fun once we are all back remotely or whenever the day comes that we see you again in person.

For now, please stay safe in this pandemic and find creative ways to stay connected to those within and outside your household,

Paula Henn
Interim Principal
View Ridge Elementary

Message from the Seattle Education Association (SEA)

This is a message of support from SEA in response to the KUOW article:

Dear View Ridge PTSA and Community,

We are reaching out to acknowledge the trauma that the View Ridge families and educators are experiencing. Seattle Public Schools' (SPS) lack of response to SEA Members' whistleblowing about the circumstances surrounding View Ridge Elementary was shocking and outrageous. Educators did identify systemic problems and followed "see something, say something" reporting in this instance.

We need a system's change now! SPS leadership must commit the time and energy needed to become responsive, restore trust, and nurture collaboration with families and educators to better serve students. Now more than ever, a district level policy is critical to support the anti-racist work needed in Seattle Public Schools.

SPS leadership is failing to address our struggling school buildings and not responding in timely ways to requests for help. Collectively, students, families, and educator voices are ignored and shutdown when asking for help to rectify systems; educators continue to struggle to get on-going support. We appreciate your energies to bring the community together and we are with you in the commitment to support your community in the work needed to heal View Ridge.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Matter (she/her) President
Uti Hawkins(she/her) Vice President
School Meals Over Winter Break

Please Note: The School Meal Sites will be closed 12/22 through 1/3. The SPS 40 meal sites will resume meal services on Monday, 1/4.

Seattle Public Schools Nutrition Services will offer one-week meal box pick up for students and their families on Monday, December 21. Read more about how to pick up a meal box (closest location at Eckstein).

Link to our PTA list of community resources.

Upcoming Special Education Forums

Join Seattle Public Schools to share your experiences during pandemic period. All sessions will be facilitated, and language supports will be available. If interested in participating, please email the Special Education Department for SPS.

- Native Indian & Pacific Islander Family Community: Friday, 12/15, 6:30-8:00pm.
- Black Family Community: Tuesday, 1/12, 6:30-8:00pm.
- Somali & Oromo Bilingual Family Community: Friday, 1/15, 6:30-8:00pm.
- BIPOC Family Community: Tuesday, 1/19, 6:30-8:00pm.
- Amharic & Tigrinya Bilingual Family Community: Friday, 1/22, 6:30-8:00pm.
- All Special Education Families: Tuesday, 1/26, 6:30-8:00pm.

Thank you!

The Giving Tree was a HUGE success! Thank you to Genny Costin for coordinating, getting the gift cards, and wrapping a book for every child! Thank you to Joyce Cho for getting opt in information! Thank you to Nurse Pamela Altman for delivering everything to families! And thank you to all of those that donated!

Updates, Reminders, Information, Etc.

- Please have your student complete their playground survey TODAY 12/18. Here is the link.
- Starting in January the library's playcourt checkout schedule will be the same each week Tuesday: 3-5pm; Wednesday: 11:15-1:30pm; Thursday: 3-5pm. Contact Ms. Young with questions.

OTTER KNOW SUBMISSIONS

The Otter Know is published during the school year once a week on Tuesday, with an Otter Know Update on Friday if needed. Articles for the Otter Know are due the Thursday before the Tuesday publication. Articles can be sent through the website, or to the Communications Committee.