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Subject: Weekly Newsletter 4-27-20

F. A. Day Middle School Newsletter

April 27, 2020

Quotes of the Week

“There’s research showing kids and young adults who have to endure forced periods of uncertainty tend to have more gratitude, flexibility and satisfaction later in life.”

“The burden parents put on themselves should not be to homeschool their children while working from home. It should be to navigate a crisis and do what they can to help their children adjust and adapt to unfathomable changes and stress while retaining as much of a sense of safety as possible.”

-Phyllis Fagell, author of *Middle School Matters*

THIS WEEK’S QUOTES

This week’s quotes are from Phyllis Fagell, author, clinician and contributor to the *Washington Post*. I have quoted Phyllis a great deal in these newsletters not just because of her connection to Day Middle School, but because of her common-sense approach to raising a well-adjusted, kind and ethical middle schooler. I am also quoting her because she has offered some particularly helpful advice to parents of middle school students in light of the current public health crisis. This quote was taken from her recent interview with *The Chicago Tribune* columnist, Heidi Stevens, linked below:

[Let's Just Keep It Real by Heidi Stevens, The Chicago Tribune](#)

Tomorrow, on Monday, we launch our first discussion of Phyllis’ book, *Middle School Matters*. **Don’t forget to RSVP below even if you have not had a chance to read it yet.** I will be hosting a second series of these book discussions later in May to include incoming 6th grade parents and will be looking for some seasoned middle school parents to help lead the discussions. So please join us for these sessions if you are able to attend.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP: Monday, April 27, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Please RSVP BELOW:

<https://forms.gle/ZJkF5LQUQFjHadKHA>

We have changed the link to Zoom for the book group. See the link below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/378647716?pwd=eTlncW13T1dFV3VuQ0N3K29lWkF0dz09>

Meeting ID: 378 647 716

Password: 9NzHgh

In preparation for our book discussion, I uploaded a copy of the parent discussion guide for Phyllis Fagell's *Middle School Matters*. On Monday, April 27th, we will be discussing the introduction and first 5 chapters. See the discussion guide questions linked below:

[Middle School Matters Parent Discussion Guide](#)

Below is the overall description of the book and purpose of our book club:

In order to maintain connectedness among our parent and faculty communities, we will be launching a book discussion group on the book, *Middle School Matters: The 10 Key Skills Kids Need to Thrive in Middle School and Beyond—and How Parents Can Help* by Phyllis Fagell. Phyllis, as I have mentioned before, is a Day graduate and a practicing school-based clinician in the Maryland area as well as a writer for the *Washington Post*.

We know middle school can be a challenging time for students and families. Ms. Fagell's insight and expertise, coupled with her engaging delivery, will provide you with helpful information to support your student (and your family!)

The first meeting of the book discussion group will be **Monday, April 27, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. (Note- this is a new time!)** We will plan on discussing Chapters 1-5, "Values and Integrity". Day Parents and Faculty are welcome to join.

Finally, even if you are not able to join us, #mschat will be hosting a 30- minute discussion of the book on Twitter at 8:00p.m. this Thursday, April 30th.

<https://twitter.com/WMSPal/status/1254444081968791553?s=20>

DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR OUT-OF-ASSIGNED DISTRICT REQUESTS

Due to the closure of the Newton Public Schools, the deadline to submit applications for Out-of-Assigned District has been extended until June 1, 2020. If you would like to request an Out-of-Assigned District placement for your student(s), please utilize the Google Form below to submit your application. If you have already submitted an application, there is no need to complete a new form. All placement decisions will be made as close to June 30 as possible.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1U2sMybKoPR9ULv6wDa8IJ2S8fWiaUP3D8wYeQR7PbMo/edit>

If you have any questions, please contact:

Elementary Education (K-5) Maureen McAdams (mcadamsm@newton.k12.ma.us)

Secondary Education (6-12) Lisa Mazzola (mazzolal@newton.k12.ma.us)

Sincerely,

Khita Pottinger-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education

Toby Romer, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education

THE EVERYWHERE BOOK FESTIVAL

Below is information about a great virtual event passed on by our ELA teachers and Dr. Romeo:

The Everywhere Book Fest is a virtual celebration of authors, books, and readers that brings the book festival experience to everyone!

On May 1-2, the book festival will open its virtual doors and unveil two free full days of live and pre-recorded sessions with your favorite picture book, middle grade, and young adult authors.

(Participants must by 18 years or older, so parents must sign up for their children).

<https://everywherebookfest.com/festival-info/schedule/>

THIS WEEK'S PRINCIPAL HOURS

In the interest of keeping open the lines of communication and supporting families in their efforts to support children at home, I will be continuing in my weekly Principal Office Hours. This week my office hours will again be held by grade based upon the schedule below:

Wednesday, April 29, 2020:

6th grade Parents: 3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

7th grade Parents: 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

8th grade Parents: 4:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99352951996?pwd=b3dFdEpOV3VJWVIwbXNWK24raE4yQT09>

Meeting ID: 993 5295 1996

Password: 7MetNV

Norms:

- To join, please click on the Zoom meeting link below at the designated time.
- You need to use the chat feature to write questions.
- This is not a “drop in office hours”. It is disruptive to add members while the session is going on, so I will only admit participants up to 3 minutes past the start time of the meeting.
- Please join at the designated grade level time to allow for smaller groups. We will use the same link to join. We will admit participants into the Zoom session only on the half hour based upon the grade level schedule. See below:

QUESTIONS AND ANSWER PARKING LOT

We made the choice not to record the Principal Office Hours to encourage an open dialogue, but in return I have captured the questions that parents shared during the three grade level sessions and recorded my answers in the ongoing Q&A Parking Lot that we have created to track ongoing questions about distance learning at Day. See that link to those questions and answers below:

[Parking Lot for Family Questions](#)

Please note that this document will remain live, and you can also use it to add your own questions. I will check it periodically to respond. The benefit of using this format is that many parents have similar questions, and you are able to view all of the responses.

Please note: In response to feedback about including only essential information in newsletters, please take note that this section below includes PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED INFORMATION AND RESOURCES. This information has already been included in past newsletters, but may be still helpful for you to have. It will NEVER include NEW information so feel free to disregard.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

I would like to begin by thanking our technology department for their efforts to support families and faculty in this new distance learning environment. I know that the difficulties in accessing Schoology and other platforms last week led to a great deal of frustration on our first day of live sessions. In response, our technology department has created a **direct email** for parents to use when they have specific technology issues. See below:

Tech Support Email for Families:

familytechsupport@newton.k12.ma.us

Additionally, technology updates and resources will be shared on the website page linked below:

Technology Support Website

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/3639>

Chromebook Distribution

Requesting an NPS Device for Home Use during School Closures

We are committed to helping families that may need access to devices at home in order to engage in online learning opportunities. **If you do not have a web-capable device at home other than a cell phone** (such as an iPad, Chromebook, PC, or Mac) **please complete this [request form](https://forms.gle/K3SgotNY38V1ncNe9)** (<https://forms.gle/K3SgotNY38V1ncNe9>) Our technology support team will be in touch with you to discuss next steps.

Please note that we are now determining if we can support families who have more than three children by creating access to additional Chromebooks. Fill out the link below if that situation applies to you family.

Please fill out the form below if you need to request additional devices. If you do not need any additional devices, no further action is required on your part.

Form: <https://forms.gle/YCZZ2NaB4kcrbyKy9>

Student Gmail

As you have been notified by our Technology Director, Steven Rattendi, last week, NPS students now have access to a student Gmail account. As teachers and students learn how to access these accounts, we will explore more direct communication with students about distance learning resources. In the interim, please have your child become familiar with their Gmail account. Instructions for doing so are linked below:

[Gmail Instructions](#)

The links have been added to the district [COVID-19 Technology Support](#) page, and to the district [Student Resources](#) page.

MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beginning this week, we will be posting “morning announcements” on the distance learning page of our Day Middle School website. Morning announcements were a big part of our routines when in school, and I think this

is a good way to maintain your child's connections with the school community and also create a formal start to their day in a distance -learning environment.

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/3660>

SCHEDULE FOR LIVE SESSIONS

In our discussions during principal office hours, parents asked if live sessions will be scheduled at the same time every week. The sessions will be on the same days of the week and during the same 2- 2.5 hour block, but the actual structure of the sessions may change each week depending on student needs. For example, one week a teacher may choose to schedule shorter live sessions with smaller groups and another week they might schedule whole class or even team sessions. Below is a schedule of the general block of time in which each live session is scheduled:

5. 6th Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.
5. 7th Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday: 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
5. 8th Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday: 12:00 – 2:30 p.m.
5. On Team Special Ed. Teachers: Live Sessions: (same as the grade level schedule above)
6. World Language Teachers: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 9:00 -11:00 a.m.
5. Arts Rotation Teachers: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
5. PE/Wellness: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
5. Lit Lab and Math Lab Live Sessions: 6th gr: 1- 3 p.m., 7th gr: 9 – 11 a.m., 8th gr.11 –1 pm
5. Exploratory Classes: Live Sessions may be Monday if available.

SPRING BOOK CHALLENGE

The Newton Free Library is hosting a spring book challenge. Families or classes can sign up. See the link below:

<https://newtonfreelibrary.beanstack.org/reader365>

ROUNDTABLE ADVISORY AT HOME

Our Roundtable Advisory Planning Group has created a website with resources for families to access activities from home including team building, fun challenges, conversation starters at the dinner table and wellness activities that all foster a sense of connection, community and social emotional and physical wellness. The web site is linked through the Day Middle School site, or can be found below:

<https://sites.google.com/newton.k12.ma.us/roundtablehome/home>

DAY LIBRARY RESOURCES

Ms. Lightfoot will be offering Live Sessions in the library based upon the following schedule:

9-9:30- Grade 6

9:30-10- Grade 7

10-10:30 Grade 8

See the update below from our school librarian, Ms. Lightfoot:

Hello Day Students,

I hope you are all doing well during these difficult and uncertain times. I really miss seeing you and having conversations with you each day. Our Library website offers many great resources; one page that will be particularly helpful to you is our Ebooks & Audiobooks Page. This can be found on the library's website under the top navigation bar.

I have created and will update a Library Schoology group for each grade where you can find links to optional activities that you may enjoy exploring/contributing to. I will also communicate ways that we can continue to build community and connection through these groups. If you have never attended one of our Lit Lunch groups, now is the time! You can expect a video of me reading a few chapters every few days on the Schoology group. Feel free to listen during your lunch time, or whenever.

Grade 6 Schoology Code M2QC-RTPG-MXWPF

Grade 7 Schoology Code QMZG-QM4Q-HKF7Z

Grade 8 Schoology Code 6GPM-J4F6-96DXR

I update the Library's Instagram daily (_daymiddleschoollibrary_) and my professional Twitter account (LightsInTheLibs) with what I am reading, fun activities I come across and, of course, cute pictures of my cats! The stream for these accounts is also available on the library's website. If you need anything, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Reach out if you need anything,

Ms. Lightfoot

GUIDANCE SCHOOLOGY COMMUNITIES

Each of your students should have received access to a grade level community created by the guidance counselors. This community includes resources for students on self-care topics from mindfulness to nutrition and stress reduction. Please reach out to your child's guidance counselor with any questions or if you are in need of any support.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Today I met virtually with Team IV student, Alexander Elvin, who is sponsoring an amazing community service project that I hope you will support. Alexander's family works in the medical field, and he is asking that our Day students and faculty write cards and encouraging words to the health care workers and their patients who are

hospitalized with COVID19 and unable to see family or friends. Here is the information from Alexander that I will also be sharing with Day parents:

Hello students, faculty and parents of our community, my name is Alexander. Our doctors in Cambridge Health Alliance are working hard to get rid of this virus one step at a time, during this hard journey our doctors and the patients in these annex wards would appreciate a card or a craft that could bring them joy, confidence, and hope. We only ask if you would like to send cards to the doctors and to the sick. We remind you that this is not something that you must do but if you could make someone happy or hopeful by sending a card. Would you?

If so, write a card and drop it off at 125 Beaumont Ave Newton, MA.

My best to you and your families,

Jackie Mann

F. A. Day Principal

jacqueline_mann@newton.k12.ma.us

(617) 559-9100

On Twitter: @JMannNPS

Newton Public Schools would like to continue connecting with you via email. If you prefer to be removed from our list, please contact Newton Public Schools directly. To stop receiving all email messages distributed through our SchoolMessenger service, follow this link and confirm: [Unsubscribe](#)

SchoolMessenger is a notification service used by the nation's leading school systems to connect with parents, students and staff through voice, SMS text, email, and social media.