



Heights Elementary School

January 6, 2020

Dear Heights Families,

Welcome back to 2020! On behalf of all of us at Heights, we hope you had a wonderful break with your families.

As we start the New Year, we come back inspired by celebrating the incredible life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Students have been learning songs during music class to sing for the school as part of our annual Heights Peace March. Additionally, students will be learning about Dr. King and making their own Peace Signs and posters for this special event.

In order to show students how they can also stand up for others and emulate Dr. King's values, I have selected One by Kathryn Otashi as January's Book of the Month. In One, students read about one particular character named Red who is not kind to others. All the other colors are afraid of Red, until a character named One comes along. One teaches students how we can stand up for ourselves and others. As a result, all the colors find their voice and all stand up together. At the end, they include Red and all characters are friends together.

One also provides us with an opportunity to discuss and practice empathy and perspective taking. Not only do we want students to develop empathy, but also act on it. As George Couros states in his book Innovate Inside the Box, "To instill or develop this empathy-courage muscle, we have to provide students with opportunities to stand up for or take action regarding something they believe in." At school and at home, we can encourage their curiosity, develop their emotional vocabulary by teaching feeling words such as disappointed, scared, frustrated, and give them a voice to share their ideas and feelings.

We look forward to an incredible year in which we continue our values of empathy, kindness and peace.

Sincerely,
Mary E. Wood

