

January 2019

Dear East Hills Family:

Happy New Year! As those three words reverberate across the world, echoed in multitudes of languages, celebrated in myriad ways, and resonate in hopes, dreams, goals, visions and even "one word" pledges, I continue to contemplate how we successfully take hold and celebrate our unique qualities as educators, parents, students and community members so as to ensure that everyone of us feels special: part of the greater COMMUNITY we so gratefully establish, maintain and nurture. As 2019 begins, let's continue to find ways to make these celebrations meaningful and inclusive.

Tradition...tradition...NO, I am not attempting to sing a popular song from Fiddler on the Roof. Tradition is defined as "...the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, an inherited, established or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior. A long established custom or belief that has been passed on in this way." What traditions do you have? Do your children know them? Have you talked about the origins of each tradition? Which one makes you smile and reflect on family, culture and community?

When I was younger: well actually young, I remember the excitement of losing a tooth and running up to my family sharing the earth shattering news. That night, like clockwork, I would carefully place the tooth under my pillow and hope that the "tooth fairy" would visit and leave me a little gift. I never really understood how that tooth fairy knew that my tooth fell out but, it was a tradition and I never questioned it. In the morning, I would wake up, quickly search under my pillow, and low and behold, the tooth was gone and a dollar bill was in its place. From time to time, the search would continue as the gift would slip onto the floor or under the bed. My daughters enjoyed the same tradition as well. In fact, I smile with glee as your children share the spaces between their teeth where a tooth had just occupied.

Is that what you did with your teeth? Is there another tooth tradition that you were raised to follow? Are you scratching your head thinking, "why would you put your tooth under the pillow?"

Well, our First Book of the Month for 2019 is an oldie but goodie: one that I read to my daughter when it first came out in 1998. *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof*, written by Selby B. Beeler explains how cultures from all over the world respond to teeth, once they come out of their mouth. The author takes her readers on a journey in and around all seven continents and countless countries to discover the many, varied traditions for missing teeth.

*"I give it to my mother who makes it into a charm, set in gold so I can wear it."*

*"My mother puts it in a tree and then my family dances around it. This makes certain that my new tooth will grow in as straight as a tree."*

*"I throw my tooth on the roof and say, blackbird, blackbird my old tooth I give you. Bring me a new tooth."*

Please revel in the joy that your children receive as they learn about all of the traditions centered on something we ALL have and ALL lose. The only difference is what we do with it... Who knows, maybe this will spark another book idea about something else we ALL share. What's most important is talking, sharing and celebrating our unique customs and traditions.

We have coupled this nonfiction picture book with a beautifully written text entitled *The Jelly Donut Difference: Sharing Kindness with the World*, written by Maria Dismondy. You may remember this author from a prior book of the month: *Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun*. *The Jelly Donut Difference* centers on the importance of kindness, caring and generosity as well as the impact these character traits, taught at home, embedded in tradition can truly make a difference in a lonely neighbor's life.

Here's to taking a kindhearted yummy bite out of this brand new year!

All the best for the New Year,

**Melissa Krieger**

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