



October 2018

Dear East Hills Families:

Throughout the school year, we continue to teach and provide experiences that demonstrate for our students the importance of being kind to one another as well as celebrate our differences. This was recently highlighted as our school celebrated Dot Day on September 15<sup>th</sup>: a day where we celebrated our unique qualities and made our mark! Over the years, our focus has been on understanding and applying the characteristics needed to achieve a Growth Mindset: resilience, optimism, compassion, flexibility and perseverance. We will continue to work closely this year so as to ensure that our children grow and develop into confident, caring and conscientious adults who look at new experiences and interactions with positivity and resolve. We are pleased to share that East Hills School continues to be a member of the nationwide No Place for Hate initiative which aims to create an inclusive school community by promoting unity, kindness and respect, while empowering schools to reduce bullying, name-calling and other expressions of bias. This past year, we earned a gold star and were recognized at a ceremony in New York City.

In honor of National Bullying Awareness Month, we will be celebrating with many activities to demonstrate that East Hills is against bullying and that we are united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion. Our Character Education Committee has planned many activities and events to maximize our community's awareness and involvement. As shared within our first letter home, CommUNITY is our focus. Well, National **Unity Day** is celebrated on October 24<sup>th</sup> and is a day where our entire school commUNITY will be encouraged to wear the color orange as a sign to show our support to those who have been bullied and unite to make a difference. In addition, our students will be prompted to discuss and write a written response challenge on the following: What does it mean to unite together to prevent bullying and creating a safer school? What does this statement mean to you, "When we stand together, no one stands alone." We hope you get a chance to see our "Unite Against Bullying" banners that will be hung in the hallways to create a powerful visual statement of support on Unity Day.

**National Mix It Up at Lunch Day**, which is celebrated on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, is one event that will continue to provide our students a chance to move out of their comfort zones as they sit by designated numbers to connect with someone new over lunch. The tables will be organized in a new way for the day. Once students are at their tables, they will pair up with a buddy. The buddies introduce themselves and then ask questions to get to know each other, using prompts that will be posted at each table. Please be sure to ask your child about this fun and informative experience. Many thanks to our Character Education Committee for spearheading this most important day.

East Hills School will continue our wonderful **Positive Lunchtime Bracelet Program** throughout the year. During the month of October, orange bracelets will be designated as unity bracelets: given to students who go above and beyond to demonstrate the character traits of kindness, acceptance and inclusion.

Finally, please be on the lookout for special phone calls that members of our staff, as well as I, will be making home to you as we honor and celebrate your children who stand tall, stand up and act as leaders in our school and commUNITY. These calls will continue for the entire year and each year moving forward.

Have you ever heard of an Etruscan pygmy shrew? How about a Zorilla? Ok, let's try one more: an Okapi? Well if you haven't it may be because they are underdogs in the animal world. Creatures who are slowpokes, pipsqueaks and stinkers! Many don't see them as strong, important animals because of their size, habits and idiosyncrasies. Yep, this paragraph is about our incredible October Book of the Month. I am so excited to share ***Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes and Stinkers Celebrating Animal Underdogs***, written by Melissa Stewart, a brilliant author. I think I can hear the gears in your mind working as you make the connection between the phenomenal character traits that these animals and others possess which "bully" creatures see as faults. Without giving away the whole book, I will say that the next time you see an Amau frog, don't make fun of its size.....

*"What others see as a weakness may actually be your strength. Don't give up!"*

As always, thank you for your continued support of our school and being such vital partners in our students' social, emotional and academic lives.

With kindness and gratitude,

***Melissa Krieger***

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