



September 2018

Dear East Hills Families:

Welcome back!!!!

While our first week of school was only three days long, it was filled with a plethora of opportunities for our children to become acquainted with their new classes: start to make new friends, reconnect with old ones and embark on their new journey.

I can't begin to tell you what an absolute thrill it was to greet all of our beautiful children each morning as they began this new chapter in their lives. The staff and I are thrilled to see their happy, joyful faces as they skipped down the hallways eager to start their day. Many thanks to our PFA volunteers who helped our second graders find their way to their classrooms during the first day of school. How lucky we are to have such a diverse community that is passionate, dedicated and committed to excellence as it pertains to our students' academic, social and emotional growth.

One of the many traditions at East Hills is our Book of the Month. Each month, we gift a special book to each of our classrooms: books that we hope will inspire, enlighten, enrich and become a springboard for important conversations among all of us.

In choosing our very first book of the year, I pondered throughout the summer the one word that resonated for me when thinking about East Hills. The word that rose above all others was COMMUNITY. COMMUNITY is defined as "a group of people who live in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common."

While I've used the word millions of times, I was reminded that the word unity comprises the majority of letters within the word. Unity is defined as "the state of being united or joined as a whole."

And thus, my new journey began. How do we as a school community ensure that all members of OUR community feel connected, share common goals and celebrate our powerful gift of diversity within the walls of our school, local and global communities?

With that in mind, it is a pleasure to share the two books that we have chosen. ***All Are Welcome***, written by Alexandra Penford and Suzanne Kaufman, is an exceptionally written book written in prose that celebrates our unique qualities. Kindness, inclusivity and diversity permeate each and every word written.

***No matter how you start your day, what you wear when you play or if you come from far away. All are welcome here. We will learn from each other, special talents we'll uncover. There's a big world to discover. All are welcome here.***

Mrs. Lewis read the book to each of our students during our first Grade Level assemblies. The children really loved it. Please continue the conversation around kindness and inclusivity within the book, **All Are Welcome** as you talk to your children. It is our goal to continue to create, maintain and enhance our commUNITY: school wide, within our classroom, on the bus, in our grade level, at home and globally so that the words above are a reality for all of us!

Do you remember any of your teachers? Which ones had a positive impact on your lives? Did you choose a career based on the experiences you had in school? Have you ever had a chance to let that teacher know just how impactful he/she was? **A Letter to My Teacher**, written by Deborah Hopkinson, takes the reader through the memories of the character as she relives and journals through anecdotes in the genre of letter writing the challenges she had as a student and the positive ways in which her teacher helped her navigate those issues in a dignified way.

This book was presented to our teachers as a reminder of the tremendous impact they (we) have on our students through our words and actions. CommUNITY includes us as educators and how we set the table, provide games, activities and team building adventures for our students to take risks, work together and celebrate our success and failures.

On behalf of Mrs. Lewis and the entire East Hills School, here's to an incredible year of joyful learning for all! We look forward to seeing you at our Open House which will take place on Thursday, September 27th.

Please be sure to follow us on Twitter at @melissakrieger2. If you would like to share a commUNITY observation from your child, please use the hash tag #EHcommUNITY.

Fondly,

*Melissa Krieger*

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