

SSD/Maplewood Richmond Heights

November 2021

Fostering Connections

Dear MRH Families,

As we all know, we are living in stressful times. One of the best ways to deal with stress is to foster connections with the many people in our lives. This newsletter offers many ways that you and your family can connect with MRH (parent/teacher conferences), SSD (workshops), other parents (the MRH Parent Advisory Council), and the larger community (Kindness article).

If we all work to connect with and support each other in the spirit of kindness, we can thrive even during these challenging times.

Respectfully,

Ben Gleason

Lead Special Education Coordinator

Upcoming

November 8 & 10- ECC and ELEM parent/teacher conferences

November 9 & 11- MS and HS parent/teacher conferences

November 12- Fall Break- no school

November 24- Teacher Comp Day- no school

November 25 & 26- Fall Break- no school

December 7- Early release day

SSD Student Scholarship Deadline Approaching!

Many opportunities for scholarships and awards are now open for SSD students! SSD scholarship applications for graduating high school seniors are active and **due Dec. 17, 2021**. Students applying for [The James E. Westbury/SSD Board of Education Scholarship](#), [The Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship](#), or [The Bonhomme Lions Club Scholarship](#)



must receive at least one service from SSD and plan to go to a college, university, or postsecondary program. All scholarships require a letter of recommendation. Visit ssdmo.org/scholarships for more information.

The Special Education Foundation (SEF) sponsors the [John Cary Scholarships](#) for high school seniors, as well. Applications are due **Jan. 24, 2022**.

For more information, please contact Deana Parsons, SSD internal communications coordinator, at dmparsons@ssdmo.org or 314.989.8102.

MRH Parent Advisory Council

The MRH Parent Advisory Council had its first meeting last spring. This group offers an opportunity to connect with other parents of students with disabilities and to learn about topics of interest. The group is actively planning for this school year. Please contact MRH parent [Mrs. Kim Gifford](#) if you are interested in participating.

Virtual Lunch and Learn

Special School District's Family and Community Outreach, Social Work, Parent Education and Diversity Awareness (PEDA), and Communications Department have teamed up to offer a virtual Lunch & Learn series for SSD families and stakeholders. The series, which will involve community organizations sharing information about their work, will take place on the first Wednesday of each month during the 2021-22 school year, from 11:30 AM - Noon.



Representatives from community organizations will participate to increase awareness about their agency and make connections with those in our SSD community who may benefit from their programs and services.

Organizations represented in the Lunch & Learn series include:

- [Behavioral Health Response](#) – Dec. 1
- [Easterseals Midwest](#) – Jan. 5
- [The Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis](#) – Feb. 2
- [Team Activities for Special Kids \(TASK\)](#) – March 2
- [St. Louis ARC](#) – April 6
- [St. Louis County Library](#) – May 4

Each event is held virtually through YouTube Live and will remain on our channel for future viewing.

Parent Education and Diversity Awareness

PEDA has several workshops scheduled for November. These include: **Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders Two Part Series Session 2 | November 15, 6:30 PM**

Identify and understand the characteristics of autism spectrum disorders and learn effective and practical strategies that will support your child's success at home and school. The second session will focus on strategies. Both sessions will have time for discussion and questions.

Presenter: John Bruno, Ph.D., SSD Autism Effective Practice Specialist

Zoom Meeting Information

<https://ssdmo-org.zoom.us/j/98286346135?pwd=VVJSTFI6ZHBVeng2dkJMTUVNYWQzZz09>



Meeting ID: 982 8634 6135

Passcode: 103277

Introduction to Charting the LifeCourse (in Collaboration with St. Louis ARC)

November 18, 2021, 6:30 PM

Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) is a set of eight principles developed to support people with IDD and their families so they can have their best lives. In this workshop, we will learn about the CtLC principles and work together to create planning and problem-solving tools. Participants will also receive updates about LifeCourse Connect Missouri, which is a new online platform that can be used by individuals and family members to access tools. This workshop is for everyone but especially self-advocates, families, and support staff.

Presenters: Sharon Spurlock, Director of Family Support, St. Louis Arc and Debra Fiasco, Administrator, Parent Education and Diversity Awareness, Special School District

Zoom Webinar Registration:

https://slarc.zoom.us/webinar/register/2516310324235/WN_baEHWPyjRquQSLVXDcfmLw

PEDA is happy to announce that we are taking applications for our Spring Parent Leadership Institute (PLI). PLI will occur over 4 evenings in February and March. You can learn more and download the application here: [Parent Leadership Institute](#)

Finally, PEDA would love your feedback! Please complete our PEDA Communications survey here: [PEDA Survey](#).

Wellness Corner- Kindness

[World Kindness Day is Saturday, November 13, 2021.](#) Kindness can take on many forms from Pay-It-Forward in the drive-through line to volunteering at an event to saying hi to 10 people each day. Kindness can be found everywhere in big and small ways. One way we often miss showing kindness is to ourselves. There has been a lot of talk in the world and especially here in schools about giving each other and ourselves grace through this pandemic. We are heading into the heart of the 3rd school year impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and our brains are not wired to handle this much uncertainty. In Brené Brown's book [Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead](#) she states "Connection is why we're here. We are hardwired to connect with others, it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives, and without it there is suffering." In this age of social distancing, we have lost comfort in making connections. In safe ways, we can find ways to get back to connecting with others and ourselves through kindness and grace.

Kindness is defined as the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. Grace is defined as courteous goodwill. Extending kindness and grace to ourselves first will carry over to others, then our community then in grand ways our world. As we head into World Kindness Day and the holiday season, let's strive to find ways to show ourselves kindness so that we can extend kindness and grace to those in our home which will cause ripples into our schools and community. Being kind to yourself promotes happiness and confidence, how you treat yourself sets the tone for how others will treat you.

Here is a quick first step - Give yourself a high five in the mirror to start your day positively. We can start each day fresh with new intentions and kindness. "Talk to yourself like you would someone you love." Brené Brown.

[The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#) has a wealth of resources and ideas. Here is a fun Bingo Board with tangible ways families can practice kindness throughout the month.

KINDNESS BINGO

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| Cleaned up a hiking trail | Wrote a thank you note for the mail delivery person | Used a reusable water bottle | Let someone go in front of me in line | Smiled at another student |
| Said 'thank you' to someone | Read to someone | Gave someone a compliment | Made a 'things I'm thankful for' journal entry | Invited someone who was eating alone to join me |
| Texted a positive message to a friend | Gave a friend or family member a hug | FILL IN YOUR OWN ACT OF KINDNESS! | Helped someone | Stayed in my pajamas all day and watched a movie |
| Left a positive note on a random locker | Got at least 30 minutes of exercise today | Held open a door | Asked someone about their day | Made someone laugh |
| Invited another student to play | Made a new friend | Woke up with a smile on my face | Wrote a happy note to myself | Put something in the recycle bin |

**RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
FOUNDATION**



STUDENT EDITION

www.randomactsofkindness.org

CARD 5

Now Hiring- Paraprofessionals and other roles

NOW HIRING



Make a difference.
Join us.
ssdmo.org/careers

SSD SPECIAL
SCHOOL
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Let's Talk!

Let's Talk is an open invitation from Special School District (SSD) to tell us what's on your mind. Let's Talk is an easy way to submit feedback at your convenience directly to the SSD staff member who can help.

Additional Resources

- [SSD Superintendent Updates](#)
- [SSD Parent Advisory Council](#)
- [Parent Education & Diversity Awareness Program](#)
- [SSD Guidance/Resources for In-Person and Distance Learning](#)
- [SSD Partner District - Maplewood-Richmond Heights](#)
- [Academic and Related Services Toolkit](#)



Special School District of St. Louis County

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