



LEARNING • ACHIEVEMENT • GROWTH • DIRECTION



# POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL

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February 2, 2018

Dear Families,

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.” Certainly, January’s MLK Holiday provided us with an opportunity to reflect on King’s many teachings and consider our work in ensuring that such words increasingly become part of the fabric of our students’ experience at Pocantico. Indeed, February, with its celebration of both Presidents Washington and Lincoln and Black History Month, there are number of opportunities I am excited to share that speak to our commitment to teaching character and intellect with our students.

- As our Diversity Committee continues to take shape, February provides an opportunity to celebrate the many contributions of African-Americans to our nation’s rich history. Classroom teachers will be exposing students to a variety of African-Americans who have made significant contributions to our country through interactive read alouds from our library circulation with age appropriate recommendations from our librarian, Ms. Gordon.



- Our ongoing commitment to students’ social-emotional learning is reflected in our **February 8<sup>th</sup>** evening for parents and students from *Playworks* - an organization that helps students work out disagreements and differences during recess. Through providing a structured approach to recess, students have opportunities to develop a sense of fairness, confidence and communication. *Playworks* will be sharing their philosophy and routines from 6:00 to 8:00 PM and attendees will have an opportunity to participate in several structured recess activities.



- On **February 15<sup>th</sup>** families are invited to attend our first Community Read evening. Parents are reminded to read the book *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. Participating families will have an opportunity to join in discussion of the text with other families and staff members. A Community Read evening helps to build effective home-school partnerships and all are encouraged to attend. Please, however, RSVP **today** so we can effectively plan for the evening. <https://goo.gl/forms/ujhvJU44vjanzGk2>

- Two middle school students will be spearheading a *Box Tops* initiative with our elementary students to help raise funds for our school community. For those unfamiliar with Box Tops, the program was initiated by General Mills products in 1996 seeking to create a program to help support education and benefit America's schools. By clipping Box Tops from participating products funds are directly raised for the school. Information will be disseminated by our middle school students, and I am delighted that this program is being initiated and organized by our own students.



Finally, as we look beyond February information regarding *Ryan's Story* will be shared by the PTA in the coming weeks. Mr. John Halligan will be visiting Pocantico on March 15<sup>th</sup> to share his son, Ryan's, tragic story with our middle school students. I have heard Mr. Halligan speak several times before, and I can personally attest to the impact his presentation has on helping to shape a positive school climate. Parents are invited to attend this special event. I would be remiss in not expressing a heartfelt thank you to the PTA for its willingness to bring Mr. Halligan's message to our school community. You can find more information here, <http://www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org/>

I look forward to our work together and the many exciting initiatives that are underway at Pocantico. Should any questions or concerns arise, please never hesitate to reach out directly.

With Warm Regards,

*Brent*

Brent B. Harrington  
Principal—Pocantico Hills

