



## KWANZAA by Mrs. Wilson

Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African cultural holiday, which celebrates family, community and culture. It is celebrated from December 26<sup>th</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup> and its origins are in the first harvest celebrations of Africa from which it takes its name. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase "matunda ya kwanza" which means "first fruits" in Swahili, a Pan-African language which is the most widely spoken African language.

Kwanzaa was first created to reaffirm and restore our rootedness in African culture. It is, therefore, an expression of recovery and reconstruction of African culture. Secondly, Kwanzaa was created to serve as a regular communal celebration to reaffirm and reinforce the bonds between us as a people.

It was designed to be an ingathering to strengthen community and reaffirm common identity, purpose and direction as a people and a world community. Thirdly, Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce the

*Nguzo Saba* (the Seven Principles.) These seven communitarian African values are: *Umoja* (Unity), *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination), *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility), *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Kuumba*, (Creativity), and *Imani* (Faith).

On Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm, Pride Academy will host its fourth Kwanzaa Celebration! The theme for Kwanzaa this year will be centered on the *Nguzo Saba* (Seven Principles) and celebrate family, community and culture. During the evening, families will interact with one another, witness the ritual of the candle lighting, and enjoy a communal meal.

We look forward to sharing the spirit of peace, unity and community as we celebrate each other and appreciate our gifts and talents.

### Save the Dates!

- **Interim Assessment 2:** 12/2-12/11. Please review the information on this page.
- **Kwanzaa Celebration:** Tues 12/10 5:30-7pm
- **Report Card Conferences:** Thursday, 12/12 3:30-6:00pm
- **12:30 Half-Day Dismissal for Professional Development:** Fri. 12/13
- **12:30 Half Day Dismissal, Philanthropy Day, Honors Awards Ceremony (11:30am):** Fri. 12/20
- **School Closed for Winter Break:** Mon. 12/23-Wed. 12/1
- **School Reopens:** Thurs. 1/2

We wish you peace,  
JOY, and gratitude  
this holiday season!  
Greetings from the  
Pride Academy staff  
and administration.



## Report Card Conferences Interim Assessment 2

Some tips to help prepare for Report Card Parent Conferences on **Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup> between 3:30 pm and 6:00 pm:**

- Let the teachers know what your concerns are and what you feel is important for them to know about how your child learns.
- Ask to look at your child's work.
- Be open-minded in working with the teacher to develop an action plan to help address any concerns that you may have.
- Share your expertise about your child and anything that may be going on with them at home to help the teachers understand how best to work with your child.
- Be prepared to hear good news as well as news that may be disappointing or surprising. Your children's teachers may have insights and knowledge about your child's learning that you may not have heard before. Be open to discussing these calmly and professionally.
- After the conference, be sure to celebrate GREAT accomplishments and action-plans for improvement with your child!

During the days between 12/2-12/11, scholars will be taking their second Interim Assessment in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. They have been working hard on improving their skills over the past six weeks and the Interim Assessment is a checkpoint to see how much progress has been made as well as what skills need continued work. Interim Assessments provide us with a data point towards success at the end of the year and a way to practice taking high stakes tests under strict testing conditions. As always, we appreciate all the support that our scholars get at home. As a reminder, please make sure your child:

- gets plenty of rest every night!
- arrives on time for school every day!
- eats a healthy breakfast!
- completes all school work and homework!
- is encouraged by you to do their very best!

Thank you for being your child's greatest cheerleader and role model for success! If you have any questions, please reach out to Mr. Ofstad at 973-672-3200 ext. 246.

## Philanthropy Day!

Active service has always been an integral part of Pride Academy Charter School's mission and vision. We work to empower our scholars to see themselves as leaders and change agents in their communities. They engage in a wide variety of service projects through their participation in school-wide food drives, service-learning classroom activities, and Project Pride. One of the major community service events at Pride Academy is our annual Philanthropy Day. On this day, our students learn about the importance of active service through presentations, lessons, guest speakers, and by actively engaging in a project that serves others.

On Friday, December 20th, Philanthropy Day will continue the tradition of service to others in need in our community through the following activities.

- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade will be making Hot Cocoa Gift Jars for seniors at the East Orange Senior Center.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade will be preparing notes and gifts for homeless veterans, as well as veterans at the Veterans Hospital in East Orange.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade will be making Movie Night Treat Bags for residents of the Isaiah House Shelter
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade will be wrapping gifts of warm winter items for St. John the Divine, a homeless soup kitchen in Newark.

### **FAMILY PHILANTHROPY!**

Parents and families are the first and most important teachers in every child's life. Foster the values of giving and service in your children by implementing some of the strategies below.

- ◆ Join your child at Pride Academy during Philanthropy. Be part of our special day of service and work side by side with your child as they work on their assigned community service project. Please reach out to Ms Dumenigo at 973-672-3200 ext. 210 for more details.
- ◆ Support Philanthropy Day by donating warm hats, gloves, scarves, and socks for our service projects.
- ◆ Find a cause that is important to you and your child, and make a small donation to that cause. For example, if your child loves animals, you might want to make a family donation to an animal rescue shelter.
- ◆ Learn about causes that affect your family and loved ones. If your family has someone who struggles with a health issue, find an organization that you can connect with and do something to serve that cause. For example, BJ's Asthma Walk in Elmwood Park every May, is a great way to help people in your own family and community learn more about asthma awareness.
- ◆ If you have a family member who is a veteran, you can write and/or send a holiday card to:  
A Recovering American Soldier  
C/O Walter Reed Army Medical Center  
6900 Georgia Avenue  
NW Washington D.C. 20307-5001

**"The results of philanthropy are always beyond calculation."**

*Miriam Beard*

## General Home Work Tips!

Completing homework regularly helps to prepare scholars for academic success both now, and in the future and develop independent learning habits and effective levels of responsibility. Please review the following tips to support your children at home and reach out to Mrs. Thomas or Mrs. Wilson if you have any questions or concerns about homework expectations.

- ✓ **Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.** Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.
- ✓ **Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary, are available.** Ask your child if special materials will be needed for some projects and get them in advance.
- ✓ **Help your child with time management.** Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.
- ✓ **Be positive about homework.** Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.
- ✓ **When your child does homework, you do homework.** Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.
- ✓ **When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.** Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him or her.
- ✓ **When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it.** Cooperate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.
- ✓ **If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away.** Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.
- ✓ **Stay informed.** Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.
- ✓ **Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework.** Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.
- ✓ **Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration.** Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.
- ✓ **Reward progress in homework.** If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort."

<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/homework/homeworktips.pdf>

# Parent Connection-by Mrs. Mack

## Your 5<sup>th</sup> & 6th grade Social Worker!



Hello Parents!

In middle school, your adolescent is learning more about how his/her feelings and behaviors can affect and impact those around them.

They are also gaining a better understanding of how interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships work. You may find that your relationship with your adolescent may become more challenging. This is because as parents, you tend to focus on your children's safety and academic growth, whereas adolescents feel that their friendships and being accepted by their peers are more paramount issues. It is important to remember that your child is likely to face social challenges that usually must be handled without additional input from parents or other adults; therefore, your child's ability to evaluate relationships, resist negative peer pressure, assert their interests while respecting the rights of others, effectively communicate their feelings/needs, and resolve conflicts peacefully are all skills that contribute toward helping your child navigate adolescent social challenges successfully.



When speaking with your child, it is beneficial to practice relationship skills, as their ability to nurture and sustain healthy relationships and meaningfully interact with others can help to contribute to their overall lifelong success. Additionally, mastering relationship skills can help your child to better understand the ins and outs of social interactions. Learning these skills before destructive habits have become established, can help an adolescent to avoid more serious problems. Additionally, it will help to promote the development of constructive behavior patterns.

Three Tips to Practice Relationship Skills at Home:

- 1. Talk to Your Child About First Impressions-** Ask your child to reflect on the first impressions that he/she is making to others. Ask questions like: "How do you see yourself?" "How do you think others to see you?" and "How do you want others to see you?" Remember, YOU are also modeling for your child when you meet new people and make introductions and you can use those situations as teachable moments.
- 2. Talk about Peer Pressure-** To help prepare your child for possible situations of peer pressure, ask them questions like, "What if your friends are spending the night at someone's a house while the parents are out of town?" Be sure to ask how your child feels about the situation posed and discuss the potential consequences. Additionally, you can practice how your child can respond to a friend who is asking them to take part. Talking through these possibilities helps to prepare your child with the language necessary to use with their peers.
- 3. Use Your Child's Interests to Help Them Develop New Friendships-** Talk to your child about the things that interest them. Youth groups, girls/boy scouts, athletic clubs, music, drama and volunteer work can help to foster your child's talents and help them find friends who share their interest.

Resource: Parent Tool Kit. Education Nation, 2016, [www.parenttoolkit.com](http://www.parenttoolkit.com). Accessed 11 Nov. 2016.

If you have any questions or if you would like to discuss any of the ideas in this article, please call

973-672-3200 ext. 224