



Save the Dates!

- **Report Card Conferences and Holiday Bazaar:** Thursday, 12/8 4:15-6:00pm
- **Pride Academy Choir perform at East Orange Central Ave Tree Lighting:** Tues. 12/13
- **Kwanzaa Celebration:** Wed. 12/14 5:30-7pm
- **12:30 Half-Day Dismissal for Professional Development:** Fri. 12/16
- **Board Meeting:** Tues. 12/20 at 6:00 pm
- **12:30 Half Day Dismissal, Philanthropy Day, Honors Awards Ceremony (11:30am):** Thurs. 12/22
- **School Closed for Winter Break:** Fri. 12/23-Mon 1/2
- **School Reopens:** Tues. 1/3

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



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 26th to January 1st 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 Wednesday, December 14th 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.

Report Card Conferences Interim Assessment 2

Some tips to help prepare for Report Card Parent Conferences on **Thursday, December 8th** between **4:15 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 12/5-12/14, scholars will be taking their second Interim Assessment in ELA and Math. 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! by Ms Dumenigo

Pride Academy is excited about our upcoming Philanthropy Day celebration on Thursday, December 22nd. Every year, we dedicate the last half-day before winter break to serving others. Philanthropy and service to our community have always been part of our mission and vision. For the past four years, our whole community has come together on this special day to serve our community. In the past, we have served veterans, children at St. Jude's Hospital, and the Emergency Shelter at the Newark YMCA, just to name a few.

This year, we will be focusing our efforts to help three of our favorite organizations: St. John the Divine Soup Kitchen in Newark, NJ, Bowser Family Senior Center and Isaiah House in East Orange. Each grade will be working on separate service projects on this day. Fifth graders will be making hot cocoa gifts for our East Orange seniors. The eighth graders will all gather in the common room to wrap warm gloves, scarves, hats, and things for the homeless at St. John the Divine.

As usual, Isaiah House will be a special focus of our efforts. Isaiah House is a shelter for teenagers and families in East Orange. Our seventh graders will be making holiday treat bags for the children that live there. These welcome bags will be decorated as snowmen and be filled with goodies and snacks.

Sixth grade leaders have decided on a special Project Pride service project, which will involve purchasing small gifts for 5 teenage boys, as well as 15 mothers and Boxes" for the residents that will be filled with 50 inspirational quotes that we hope will inspire them during this challenging time.

We ask all of our 5th, 7th, and 8th grade families to support us by donating new warm gloves, hats, scarves, socks, and thermals, which we will have wrapped by our 8th graders. Sixth grade families will be invited to sign up to purchase a small gift for the teens and families in need at Isaiah House. Please be sure to review the handouts regarding Philanthropy Day, so that you can best support our community service projects. As always, we thank you for your support of Pride Academy's mission and vision.

Flu Protection Tips!

- 1. Disinfect:** Create a homemade disinfectant spray using 3 cups water, 1/2 white vinegar, and 15 drops lavender or tea tree essential oil: these are natural disinfectants. Using a spray bottle and/or clean cloth, wipe down doorknobs, refrigerator handles, light switches, etc. Use this to gently wipe down your phones and keyboards as well.
- 2. Keep germs from getting cozy in your bed:** Beds are harbingers of disease! Use a mattress cover, wash your linens frequently (at least once a week), and wash your blankets, comforters, and pillows monthly. Refresh your mattress monthly by combining 1/2 cup of baking soda with a few drops of lavender essential oil. Sprinkle it across your mattress. Let it sit for about an hour and then vacuum it up.
- 3. Get a lot of rest:** Most doctors state that lack of sleep can have a detrimental effect on your immune system. There are lots of ways to help improve the quality of your sleep, from cutting back on alcohol to cutting back on screen time in bed. Caffeine is also another stimulant that can interfere with loss of rest. Please carefully read food and beverage labels carefully for ingredients.

Please contact our school nurse, Ms Evans, if you have any questions at 973-672-3200 ext. 202.

Home Work!

Our school leaders and teachers have worked together to update and clarify our Homework and Make-up Work policy. These changes will support our collective and mission-based goals:

- ✓ to prepare scholars for academic success both now, and in the future;
- ✓ to support our families and teachers in working with our children to ensure that they develop independent learning habits and effective levels of responsibility;
- ✓ to provide a greater level of uniformity in our practices across grade levels.

Please review the attached Home Work and Make-Up Policy and Procedures and sign/return the tear off section on the back page and reach out to Mrs Thomas if you have questions or concerns!



Parent Connection-by Mrs. Mack

Your 5th & 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. 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