



Save the Dates!

- **8th Grade Parent Fundraising Meeting:** Wed. 11/2 at 5:30PM
- **Parent Council Meeting:** Wed. 11/9 at 5:30PM
- **Board Meeting:** Wed. 11/16 at 6pm
- **Dreamality Student Choir Thanksgiving Concert:** Thurs. 11/17 at 5:30PM
- **End of First Trimester:** Tues. 11/22
- **Half Day Dismissal:** Wed. 11/23
- **School Closed Thanksgiving Break:** Thurs. 11/24 & Fri. 11/25
- **School Reopens:** Monday 11/28
- **Parent Educational Workshop on Diabetes:** Wed. 11/30 at 5:30PM

GRATITUDE IS OUR ATTITUDE!

The November-December season is a perfect time to spend with our children showing them and helping them to show their caring and gratitude for those people in their lives who provide for them emotionally, spiritually, and physically. As parents/guardians we can model caring and appreciation to our children by doing some of the following:

- Making and dedicating time in our busy schedules to take an interest in our children's day at school and in their homework and grades.
- Setting aside special time just to spend one-on-one with each of our children - reading, cooking, watching a movie, and making, not always purchasing, a special gift for someone.
- Modeling to your children that the greatest gifts of gratitude that they can give to others are acts of kindness, caring, and respect: lending a helping hand; keeping a positive attitude about things that are different, new, or unfamiliar; sharing a smile,

PRIDE PARENTS SHINE!

For the past several years, Pride Academy Charter School has celebrated Thanksgiving by helping those who are in need through a partnership with Ellen's House, which is a non-profit that works to help those in need. Ellen's House was founded by one of our very own parents, Ms. Lavonia Bearfield, who is the mother of seventh grader, Kayla Cross.

Ms. Bearfield was inspired to start Ellen's House after the passing of her mother, Ellen. Her mother was working toward opening a Women's Shelter when she passed away of kidney disease at the age of 39. Ms. Bearfield decided to take on her Mom's dream. "I started Ellen's House because I wanted to see my Mom's dream become a reality."

For the past few years, Pride Academy has helped Ellen's House with a Thanksgiving Food Drive. This year, we will be working on their new "Pocket Book Drive". They will be collecting used purses and pocket books, and filling them with toiletries to give to homeless women. Toiletries will include soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc. Pride Academy will be doing their part by asking 5th and 6th grade students to bring in used purses and pocket books. The 7th and 8th graders will be asked to bring in the toiletries. Our school community will work together with love and generosity to bring smiles and comfort to others in our wider communities!



Ms. Bearfield serving seniors during a Thanksgiving dinner at Ellen's House.

Parent Connection-by Mrs. Mack Your 5th & 6th grade Social Worker!

Hello Parents!



If your child's thoughts, feelings or behaviors were causing them to struggle, would you know how to talk to them about it? What if you discovered they were engaging in activities that were potentially destructive or even harmful? If they came to you looking for help, would you know what to do?

Recent studies have found as many as one-third to one-half of adolescents in the U.S. have engaged in some type of non-suicidal self-injury. Self-injury often begins around the ages of 12 to 14, and it is most commonly the result of feelings of sadness, distress, anxiety, or confusion. Many often use self-injury as a way to cope with these negative emotions.

Some may find themselves with a constant preoccupation with a perceived defect or flaw in his/her physical appearance, which may not be observable to others, or appears only slight. Some may focus on the numbers on the scale, and develop unhealthy eating habits that can put both mind and body at risk.

Others may engage in body-focused repetitive behaviors like hair pulling or skin picking, which are related to obsessive-compulsive disorder and cause shame and isolation.

If you think your son or daughter is dealing with low self-esteem or poor body image, is feeling depressed or is engaging in risky behaviors like disordered eating, self-injury or body-focused repetitive behaviors, there is hope and there is help.

Mental Health America (MHA) has developed tools and resources to inform both students and parents about why mental health matters, and how self-esteem, self-image and the disorders that affect the way young people see and treat themselves can affect a student's overall health. Visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net/back-school to learn more.

There are also things parents can try to avoid. Parents and caregivers often feel comfortable questioning or criticizing a young person's choices—and generally do so with the best of intentions. Sometimes though, the way the words come out ends up doing more harm than good. When it comes to self-esteem and body image, it is important to remember that words matter. Try not to criticize or point out flaws, but rather encourage your child to talk to you about his or her feelings about their body or self-image.

Know that issues of low self-esteem, self-injury, body-focused repetitive behaviors, and distorted body image are treatable and should be addressed as soon as possible. Just like physical illnesses, treating mental health problems early can help to prevent more serious problems from developing in the future. If you are concerned that you or someone you know may be experiencing a mental health problem, it is important to take action and to address the symptoms early. Start the conversation. Your child will be glad you did.

There are also serious signs that someone is in crisis and needs more immediate help. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text "MHA" to 741741 to connect with a crisis counselor.

In life threatening emergencies, go to your local emergency room or call 911. ** This article was written by Mental Health America (www.mentalhealthamerica.net)**

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

Assessment News by Mr. Ofstad

During the weeks of 11/28 through 12/13, your child will be taking very important Interim Assessments in ELA and Math! Over this period of time, students will only be testing for two days and they will be testing at different times during their schedules. In order to create the best testing conditions as possible for everyone during each day of testing, we will reinforce quiet and courteous hallway transitions and classrooms.

Historically, Pride Academy has done very well both on the Interim Assessments as well as the annual State Tests. We are very proud that our school has been recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education as a "Tier 1" school for the past four State Tests on record. We are also eagerly awaiting the scores comparing the scores of our Pride Scholars to those of peers around New Jersey. For the 2014-2015 school year Pride Academy was ranked #9 out of 610 school districts in terms of growth, placing Pride Academy in the top 1% in New Jersey, something the whole school community can be immensely proud of!

The PARCC score is divided into 5 levels, where level 4 is considered "on grade level" and level 5 is considered "above grade level. The overall change in the scores from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016 is as follows:

Who?	% of students on level 4 and 5 in 2015-2016 compared to 2014-2015 on the PARCC Assessment
NJ average PARCC score for math and ELA in 2015-2016	4% more students on level 4 and 5
Pride Academy Average PARCC score for math and ELA in 2015-2016	12% more students on level 4 and 5

The table shows that while New Jersey students as a whole grew from 2014-2015, Pride Academy students had three times that growth. The scores students receive on their Interim Assessments play a very important role in preparing for these high levels of achievement on the PARCC. During these assessments, students are tested on what they have learned over the past six weeks of teaching as well as their most recent weeks of learning. Their teachers analyze the assessment results, plan interventions and enrichment activities based on the trends, and revise their curriculum maps to solidify how to most effectively support your children as they prepare for PARCC in April and promotion to their next grade. It is very important that each of our student's scores reflects the best of his/her ability at the point in time that the assessment is given. We need you to partner with us in the following ways in order to support your children in doing their very best on the Interim Assessments:

- Ensure that your child has a good night's sleep prior to testing;
- Encourage your child to eat a wholesome breakfast to fuel their brains on testing days;
- Ensure that your child arrives to school early on testing days to avoid worrying about being late and missing time;
- Talk to your Pride Scholar about preparing for the assessment and doing their best; you are their greatest and most influential cheerleader!

As always, we appreciate and acknowledge all the effort and amazing results our Pride Scholars accomplish. We also know that the results and growth would not be possible without the support and love of parents, guardians, siblings, aunts and uncles, grandparents, coaches, mentors, spiritual leaders, and other key figures in our Pride Scholars' lives. Please know that the support and affection you give helps us build powerful futures for our school and for your children!