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## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL** – Dr. Mathew Nelson

November was another great month at Discovery Elementary! In November, our Community C of focus was “Contribute” and we held our annual Thanksgiving Food Shelf community service project. Our families contributed to the Buffalo Food Shelf in a big way by bringing in \$692.78 in monetary donations, wow! The Buffalo Food Shelf wanted us to extend their sincere appreciation for the generous support!

In December we will be focusing on “Celebrate” because we sure do have a lot to celebrate at DES and we are thankful for that. I believe it is important for us to stop and reflect on and celebrate the many outstanding people who help us provide a great experience for the students of Discovery Elementary. We appreciate all that is done by our teachers, educational assistants, secretaries, school nutrition employees, custodian staff, nursing department, social worker, speech pathologist and school psychologist to provide a high-quality learning experience for each individual student. The gifts of time and talent are always appreciated. We would also like to thank our dedicated parents, families, and community members for all that they do for the Discovery students.

As we move into the coldest winter months we will continue to remind the children to wear appropriate clothing for the weather. Playground rules and procedures for cold, wintry weather and information about emergency school closings can be found in the handbook and on the district website. District 877 elementary schools send students outside for recess every day when the temperature and/or wind chill are at or above -5 degrees. Students love playing outside and we just want to make sure they are dressed appropriately, and your assistance is greatly appreciated.

At Discovery Elementary school we all take great pride together in educating the whole-child to help our students learn, grow, and develop both academically and socially/emotionally. One element that we are purposely embedding into our culture and everyday practice is that of a Growth Mindset. On the following page, we have included some information from Mindset Works on the concept of nurturing a Growth Mindset culture and some things that you can feel free to integrate into your home to help connect it for your children.

“Together We’re Better”



# How Parents Can Help Instill a Growth Mindset at Home



(From [www.mindsetworks.com](http://www.mindsetworks.com))

It's no secret that parenting can be hard at times. Having a growth mindset and believing in the power of a “not yet” attitude helps. Research shows that parents can have a powerful impact on their children’s mindsets. The language you use and the actions you take show your children what you expect. Giving process praise, talking about the brain, accepting mistakes as learning opportunities, and understanding the role of emotions in learning are all practices you can begin today. The way we praise our children can have a profound impact on their mindset. Research on praise and mindsets shows that when we praise children for being smart, it promotes a fixed mindset. It sends a message that their accomplishments are trait-based, and tied to something innate. In contrast, praising kids for working hard promotes a growth mindset. It sends a message that the child’s effort is what led them to success.

Say This	Avoid This
“I can see you worked so hard on this!” - Say this because it helps your children understand you value their effort	“You are so Smart!” - Avoid saying this because it makes them think of intelligence as a fixed quality.
“It seems like it’s time to try a new strategy.” - Say this because it lets your children know that they control outcomes by making choices.	“It’s okay. Maybe you’re just not cut out for this!” - Avoid saying this because it makes your children think they don’t have the capacity to improve.
“It looks like that was too easy for you. Let’s find you something more challenging so your brain can grow.” - Say this because it teaches kids that learning should be challenging, and if tasks are too easy then your brain isn’t growing.	“That’s right!” You did that so quickly and easily; great job!” - Avoid saying this because praising tasks completed without much effort paints effort in a negative light and encourages a fixed mindset.
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## Talk About the Brain

The brain is far more malleable than we once thought. Teaching our kids that they actually have control over growing their brains through the actions they take is empowering! Tell your children that when they work hard, that’s the feeling of their neurons connecting. The dendrites are reaching out to other dendrites, trying to connect to make a stronger brain. What strengthens those connections is practice, asking questions, and actively participating in learning. When children learn that their brains physically change with effort, it leads to increased motivation and achievement.

## Accept Mistakes as Learning Opportunities

One of the best ways you can model a growth mindset is to speak candidly about the mistakes you’ve made, and what you’ve learned from them. Speak positively about your mistakes and struggles, and this will show your children that taking risks and making mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. Explain to your children that trying hard things is what helps us grow, and you can’t be perfect when you try something hard!

## October "C" Students of the Month - Cooperate



## November "C" Students of the Month - Contribute





## Thanksgiving Food Drive



Discovery Elementary Student Reps presented a check to the Buffalo Food Shelf in November for \$692.78. Thank you to the DES Families for all of your contributions to the Thanksgiving Food Drive.

## Toys for Tots- Winter Community Service Project

Discovery Elementary School will participate again this year in the Toys for Tots program that is sponsored by the Buffalo Rotary. This year instead of focusing on collecting monetary donations within classrooms, if students and their families wish to/are able to contribute we are asking for donations of toys that elementary-aged children would enjoy.

The drive will end on Friday, December 15th. Bank West once again partnered with us and donated/matched the first \$500 of toys! Our 5th grade student reps are going to be taking a field trip to Target to pick out the \$500 worth of toys! We thank them for their generosity!

**WHAT:** Toys that elementary-aged children would enjoy

**WHERE:** Brought into the main office to place in donation bins

**WHEN:** Now through Friday, December 15th



Please note: There is no obligation to participate and we are not keeping track of donations by class or having any sort of contest to raise donations. We are just using this as a Discovery Community Service opportunity to help make Christmas a little brighter for children in need within our community!



## Upcoming Important Dates



**\*December 1st- Early Release**

**\*December 14th- Choir Concert 6:30 p.m.**

**\*December 15th- Toys for Tots Final Donation Day**

**\*December 22nd-January 1st-No School (Winter Break)**

**\*January 5th- Early Release**

**\*January 15th- - No School (Martin L. King Jr. Day)**

**\*January 26th- No School (Teacher workshop Grades K-8)**

## Updates from the Health Office

BHM Illness and Injuries Guideline for school attendance can be [found here](#). **Please remember to call the attendance line for every day your student is going to be absent.** This helps us make sure your student's absence is coded correctly, but more importantly, it helps us assure your student is safe and accounted for. Students are welcome to **return to school 24 hours after their last symptom (fever, vomiting, diarrhea), with no fever reducing medications.**

### **Save the Date: Give Kids a Smile February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Each year, dental professionals from across the state participate in *Give Kids a Smile*, providing free dental care to low-income children in need. The event takes place on the first Friday and Saturday of February and is made possible by the collaborative effort of the Minnesota Dental Association, volunteer dentists, and other generous sponsors. Registration begins January 1, 2024. Parents can find local participating clinics by visiting [mndental.org](http://mndental.org) or by calling United Way 2-1-1 or 1-800-543-7709. *Please note: Every child must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian and must have an appointment in advance. Walk-in care is not available.*

### **Tips for Staying Healthy, Happy and Safe as we approach the holidays**

Give the gift of being healthy this holiday season with a few simple tips to keep you, your family and your friends, healthy this time of year and all year round!

**\*Wash your hands.** Washing your hands often will help limit the spread of germs that can make you and others sick. Wash your hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds.

**\*Eat healthy and get plenty of exercise!** Enjoy the holidays the healthy way with balance and moderation. Skip the tempting sweets and heavy side dishes by mixing in fresh fruits and seasonal vegetables. With the kids off of school, be active as a family every day.

**\*Bundle up!** Stay warm and dry by wearing appropriate clothing for being outdoors. Dress in layers of light, warm clothing and remember to wear hats, scarves, mittens and warm boots!

**\*Handle and prepare food safely.** Follow these four simple steps to decrease your chance of getting sick from holiday eats. Wash your hands and food preparation surfaces often, avoid cross contamination between raw and cooked foods, cook foods, especially meats, to proper internal temperatures and refrigerate leftovers promptly.

**\*Stress management!** Amongst all of the hustle and bustle, remember to take time for yourself. Take a moment to do some deep breathing exercises or meditation. Get plenty of sleep and don't over-commit yourself to prevent anxiety and pressure. For more ideas to keep the whole family healthy, happy and safe during this holiday season, visit [healthpoweredkids.org](http://healthpoweredkids.org).