

# MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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### Superintendent of Schools

*Weekly Community Message No. 10*

**Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.**

February 19, 2021

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

Last week I mentioned a few spirit-lifting activities around the district. Here's one from Bradford to enjoy, [Valentine's Day messages](#) to senior citizens from our young learners. In another good deed, Buzz Aldrin Student Council members wrote letters to first responders in the community thanking them for their service. Also spreading kindness second grader Jayla Pitts organized Project Love to help homeless women in and around our area. Read more about our students and their positivity on our [website](#) and remember to follow us on Twitter @montclairschls for good news and updates.

Our high school students have had the opportunity to participate in the Adopt a Survivor Program, created by Holocaust survivor, Irving Roth. The program, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ, pairs a survivor with students. Our students, from Social Studies teacher Shana Stein's classes, virtually met with Otto Salamon, who shared his story. After reading his book, students created websites to memorialize Salamon's experience for future generations.

This week I want to express how grateful I am to all of our families who have been supporting others in need. Whether it's snow related or another setback, friends and neighbors have pitched in to help fellow families, making sure those struggling had assistance, food or much needed supplies. You have displayed such caring and generosity during these challenging times.

Please see some district updates below:

#### **Update on Delayed In-Person Instruction**

At the present time, there are no new developments to report. The district and the MEA continue to engage in mediated discussions.

#### **Pupil Services Update**

Extended School Year will be increased from four to six weeks giving students 33% more instructional time. We are eager to use this time to aid in addressing any regression that took place during the pandemic.

We are also happy to announce that a new cohort of teachers will be trained in the Orton Gillingham approach to reading instruction. Currently we have 12 teachers trained, and our goal is to add another 12 by September.

The Special Education audit is underway. The consultant has met with Board members and parents and beginning March 1 will be meeting virtually with district personnel and conducting various focus groups.

#### **NEW: Food Service**

Montclair Public Schools participate in the USDA Child Nutrition Program and benefits have been approved through June 2021 so that every student can receive a free meal seven days per week regardless of their free or reduced meal status. See [flyer](#) for details.

#### **Registration Reminder**

Registration for the 2021-22 school year began on February 15. For more information on the registration process and documents required to register, please visit our [website](#). All registration events will remain virtual for the 2021-22 school year.

#### **Principal Appointment**

Ms. Briony Carr-Clemente will be taking the helm as [Edgemont School's principal](#) on April 20. She is eager to join Edgemont's vibrant community and is committed to weaving academics, social emotional factors, and equity together for a rich, inclusive learning environment. Mr. Mike Chiles will remain as Interim Principal.

#### **Technology**

The Technology Department is asking all families who are using personal devices to utilize their Google Chrome Browser when participating in virtual learning. Our district has invested in many online tools and various applications that work best with the Chrome browser. Please call our Technology Support Line, **301-259-1510**, should you require any assistance. Lastly, please contact your child's building administrator if you are in need of a device.

#### **Reminder: A Message from the Montclair Scholarship Fund**

The **Montclair Scholarship Fund (MSF)** awards scholarships to MHS college-bound seniors with financial need. After dreaming big for four years, students find themselves priced out of the higher education opportunities they have worked so hard to achieve. The MSF expects to receive an increased number of applications for scholarships in the wake of the economic strife of the pandemic. If you are able, your contribution to the fund would be incredibly valuable as it helps to fund a need-based scholarship for our most vulnerable and deserving students. Donations may be made online at [www.montclair scholarshipfund.org](http://www.montclair scholarshipfund.org). No amount is too small.

### **Quarter Century Club Recognition**

At the February 17 Board of Education meeting, the district paid tribute to its dedicated teachers and educational professionals who have served for 25 years. We applaud these staff members on achieving this milestone and are thankful for their commitment to Montclair Public Schools.

Renee Arnold, Hillside  
Bronwyn Beesley, Northeast  
Susan Bleecker, Watchung  
Cheryl Cottle, Buzz Aldrin  
Rae D'Allegro, Nishuane  
Sandra Egan, Buzz Aldrin  
Colleen Frank, Northeast

Tawonnia Granderson, Renaissance  
Helen Kuryllo, Montclair High School  
Alfreda Mayer-Massop, Northeast  
Dione Olson, Watchung  
Drury Thorp, Watchung  
Patricia Vargas, Bradford  
Monique Wade, Central Office

### **Free Food and Music Event**

Toni's Kitchen, Parents who Rock and Montclair Mutual Aid have organized a free food bag and winter coat giveaway along with live music this Sunday, February 21, at Glenfield Park for the Montclair community. See flyer with details in [English/Spanish](#).

*Reminder: If you or a family member needs to be tested for COVID-19, the YMCA is offering [free COVID testing](#) at its Park St. facility.*

*Stay safe and warm!*

Sincerely,  
Dr. Jonathan Ponds  
Superintendent

