



# PRAIRIE EXPRESS

October, 2011

## Message from the Principal

October, 2011

For many families, evenings are filled with activities and events every night. As soon as your child walks through the door, they may be busily preparing for practice, getting ready to go to lessons, or simply needing to take time to be a kid. The daily social, emotional, and physical responsibilities can be a bit taxing. Add to these responsibilities daily homework. When will it be completed? How do you make that happen?

Ask yourself the following scenarios:

- Your child has a big science project due tomorrow, but his/her afterschool schedule is filled with practice. There simply hasn't been enough time to finish the project. Should you do most of the work yourself so that it can be turned in on time?
- Your son/daughter has a math assignment due and he/she is having a difficult time understanding the concepts. Do you just provide the answers so that it is done?
- Your son/daughter informs you they want to enter the Young Authors book writing on Friday. The entry is due on Monday and your family will be traveling out of town for the weekend. Your son/daughter puts together a draft, however you believe that the theme should be changed and you provide the storyline. Should you just give them the storyline?

There is no denying it; we all want our children to do well. Sometimes, however, as parents, we provide too much assistance and the end product is not a true representation of our children. The question is "How much is too much?" Their grades may be stellar; however their self esteem may suffer. Children are more attune to their environment than we might think. They know when they have earned the "grade" and when they have not.

The question remains "What should a concerned parent do?" "How much help is reasonable?" "What kind of suggestions or assistance is acceptable?" "What do you do if they don't understand their homework, even after getting guidance from you?"

Providing guidance is acceptable. Help your child utilize various resources to help them develop an understanding of the concepts (use materials in the house, develop mnemonic phrases, brainstorm together, and develop lists to help remember). Provide encouragement through frustration and celebration. Encourage your child to be willing to step "outside the box" and expand their thoughts even if it is a scary idea. It may stir up new thoughts and allow them to show their ideas in a different manner. Let them follow their own path, even when you are convinced it will not work. That is part of the learning process!

Finally, know when to step in and ask for help. If your child is consistently having trouble and things do not seem to be improving, it's time to let the teacher know. Chances are that your child isn't the only one who is confused. When you ask for help, it models the great skill of asking when you don't understand.

*Dean Kaminski*

**Prairie Elementary**  
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 janicehenn@waunakee.k12.wi.us

**How to Reach Us**

Principal	Dean Kaminski	849-2200
Admin. Assist.	Geri Breunig	849-2200
Attendance	Janice Henn	849-2235
Health Assistant	Tanya Stone	849-2203
Nurse	Katie Homar	209-9950
School Counselor	Jo Howard	849-2206
Psychologist	Lisa Kjos	849-2205
Social Worker	Kristin Meyer	849-2204
Lamers Bus Service		850-5253
Taher Food Service		849-2185

**Information you will find inside:**

- Prairie Spirit Days
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Trick or Treat for UNICEF
- Fall Fun Night
- Halloween Parade
- PTO Dates
- Prairie Food Drive
- Book Fair
- Early Release Days
- Looking Ahead Dates
- Free Prairie Community Concert
- Take Charge of Education Donation
- Pop Top Project
- Birthday Sundaes
- From the Health Office
- Safety in the Crosswalks/Parking
- Families of Character
- Adopt a Classroom Program
- September Pictures/Character



## Prairie Spirit Days

- OCT 14 CRAZY HAIR DAY
- NOV 9 RED, WHITE AND BLUE  
(VETERAN'S DAY ASSEMBLY)
- NOV 22 STUFFED ANIMAL AND SLIPPER
- DEC 9 MIX/MATCH CLOTHING, OR SCHOOL T-SHIRT
- JAN 20 HAWAIIAN DAY
- FEB 3 SPORTS JERSEY DAY (WEAR A FAVORITE TEAM  
JERSEY OR YOUR TEAM JERSEY)
- MAR 2 READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY  
(WEAR RED AND WHITE AND HATS)
- APR 13 CAPS FOR A CURE (HAT DAY)
- MAY 18 SCHOOL T-SHIRT DAY OR FAVORITE PRAIRIE  
T-SHIRT

## Parent/Teacher Conferences (Grades K-4)

Monday October 17th, from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Friday, October 21st from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Conferences are scheduled for 15 minutes. If you need more time please set up a separate time to meet with your child's teacher.

### **Our shared staff will be at Prairie on:**

#### **October 17**

- Ms. Bordeleau - Spanish (Grade 4) 3:30-5:30
- Ms. Clevenger - Physical Therapist
- Ms. Mauer - Occupational Therapist
- Mrs. Wright - Art
- Mrs. Voeller - Pathways

#### **October 21**

- Mrs. Greven - Music (Kindergarten) 8:00-9:00
- Mr. Gustafson - Physical Education
- Ms. Clevenger - Occupational Therapist
- Mrs. Wright - Art
- Mrs. Hepler - ELL (English Language Learner)
- Ms. Bordeleau - Spanish (Grade 4)

**If you would like to schedule a conference time with related arts (PE, Music, Art, Spanish) teachers, please call the office at 849-2200.**

Parent Teacher Conferences will also be held on:

Monday, March 5th - 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 9th from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



## Trick or Treat for UNICEF

Prairie students will soon be bringing home bright orange Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF boxes. We are encouraging our students to take their boxes along while trick-or-treating and ask for donations to UNICEF. UNICEF helps children in over 150 countries by providing immunizations, education, clean water and sanitation, health care, and nutrition. Last year our students raised \$1257.05 and our goal this year is to raise over \$1000!

One of the goals for both parents and school is to develop compassionate, caring, and responsible citizens. Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF is one example of what schools call "service-learning activities" - where students learn through doing, and give back to the community through their actions. By trick-or-treating for UNICEF, students discover that they can have fun while they are learning about and helping children in our global "community".

Students will learn about UNICEF during guidance time in their classrooms during October, and practice what to say while trick-or-treating. Students should bring the money they raise back to school the week after Halloween and give it to their classroom teacher. They can return it in their box or put it in a Ziploc bag. They do not need to count their money.

More information on this project will be coming home in take-home folders. Participation in this project is optional, but we hope many of our students will participate again this year. If parents have any questions about Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF, they can contact Kristin Meyer, School Social Worker at 849-2204 or [kmeyer@waunakee.k12.wi.us](mailto:kmeyer@waunakee.k12.wi.us).

Also, check out the Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF website at:

<http://youth.unicefusa.org/trickortreat/About/>



Interested in attending the next PTO meeting? It will be held at 6:30 p.m. on October 12th In the Prairie LMTC

Upcoming Meetings  
Nov. 9, Dec. 14, Jan. 11, Feb 8, March 14,  
April 11, May 9, June tbd



### Fall Family Fun Night (October 25)



We will be sponsoring our annual Family Fun Night on Oct. 25 from 6-7:30 p.m. This is always a fun event for families to come together to make crafts, have some munchies and maybe even get spooked by our witch. Hope to see you there.

We will provide cookies and Halloween cards to decorate.

Bring your own pumpkin and we will supply decorations for you to use.

You'll be able to drink a spooky drink and eat a spooky snack!

Create cool projects and much more!!



Watch for more information!  
BOO!



### Fall Fun Night Volunteer sheet

Fall Fun Night is October 25th<sup>t</sup>. If you are interested in volunteering please fill out the volunteer form. The link is now on our webpage. [http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/prairie/PTO/Fall%20Family%20Fun%20Night%20volunteers%20note%](http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/prairie/PTO/Fall%20Family%20Fun%20Night%20volunteers%20note%20sheet.pdf)



### Halloween Parade (October 31)

The Halloween parade will be held on Monday, October 31 at 8:00. Children may wear costumes to school and bring a change of clothing for after the parade. Costumes do not need to be elaborate. If the costume includes a mask, please be sure your child is comfortable and able to see. A small amount of makeup is allowed if this will not bother your child's skin. Knives, guns, swords, or other weapon-like objects are NOT allowed. (If you do not want your son/daughter to participate in the parade, please send a note or call the school). Parents are invited to come and watch the parade.

### PTO Sponsored Events

Fall Family Fun Night: Tues. Oct. 25

Family Fun Fitness Night: Fri. Feb. 10

Family Learning Night: Tues. Mar. 20

Ice Cream Social: Thurs. May 10

### Parent Checklist

- ⇒ Share plans for early release (Oct. 26) with your child.
- ⇒ Return field trip permission slips.
- ⇒ Plan your child's Halloween parade costume.
- ⇒ Check contact information in Infinite Campus. Notify school office of any changes or updates as needed.
- ⇒ Send notes or call office before 1 PM if after school arrangements change.
- ⇒ Post events calendar at home. Check website for updates.
- ⇒ Check your child's Thursday folder and return permission slips or other information to school as needed.



## Prairie Food Drive

(October 31-November 11) This event is being coordinated by our fourth grade classrooms.

The Waunakee schools will be participating in a food drive to benefit the community. Children may bring canned goods, packaged items, but no perishables, to school and we will collect them. The items are then taken to the St. Andrew's food pantry and the Ecumenical Board to be distributed to local people in need.

The food drive will run from October 31-November 11. This would be an excellent opportunity for children to learn about sharing, caring and citizenship. Please consider donating items for the drive. Remember to check expiration dates.



## BOOK FAIR COMING TO THE PRAIRIE LMTC OCTOBER 17<sup>TH</sup>-21<sup>ST</sup>

This year's Book Fair is just "around the corner." It will be starting on Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, and will run through Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. The book fair will be open each day from 7:30 – 3:15 and will remain open until 7:30PM on Parent – Teacher conference night – **Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup>**. It will also be open on the morning of conferences, **Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>**, from **8:00-12:00**, at which time it will be closing for the day. We hope to see a lot of you and your children at the book fair as I anticipate that it will offer many outstanding books for purchase just like it has during past years!

Also, if anyone would happen to be interested in helping out during the book fair, please contact the school office and give them your name.

They'll forward it to me, and I will see that it is forwarded to our PTO volunteer coordinator who will then get in touch with you. Volunteer help is critical in having a successful book fair, and I sincerely appreciate all of the people who give of their time in helping out with the book fair.



## Early Release Days

Please note that school will be dismissed two hours early (at 12:40) on the following days:

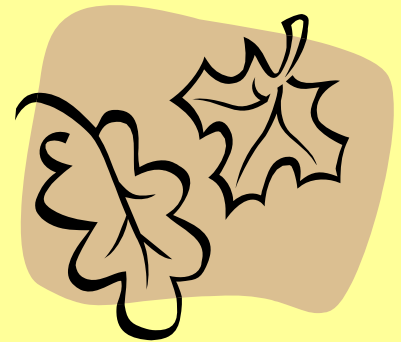
Wednesday, October 26, 2011

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

Friday, February 24, 2012

Friday, March 23, 2012

Friday, May 25, 2012



## Looking Ahead

### SEPTEMBER

29-30 Skip Jones - Artist in Residence

30 - Free Family Concert (Skip Jones 5-6pm)

### OCTOBER

13- Kindergarten to Firehouse

14- Fireman's Program

17-21 Book Fair

17- Parent/Teacher Conferences (3:30-7:30)

19- Kindergarten to Indian Lake

21- No School for students

21- Parent/Teacher Conferences (8:00 a.m-12:00)

25- PTO Prairie Fall Fun Night

26- **2 Hour Early Release** (12:40 release)

27-28 No School

31- Halloween Parade

### NOVEMBER

4- First Quarter End

11- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Veteran's Day Program

22- **2 Hour Early Release** (12:40 release)

23-25 No School (Thanksgiving)

### UPCOMING TESTING DATES

Nov. 7-11 - WKCE Testing (Grade 3)

Nov. 4-11 - WKCE Testing (Grade 4)

### DECEMBER

16- K-4 Winter Program

23-Jan 1 - Winter Break



## Skip Jones Artist in Residence

### An Invitation To A Prairie Community Concert

As noted in the September Express, our students will have the opportunity to participate in a 2-day Artist in Residence opportunity with Folksinger Skip Jones on September 29th and 30th. Skip will be providing a free concert for our Prairie families. This free concert will be hosted from 5:00-6:00 p.m. on September 30th, in the Prairie Gymnasium. We are hopeful that you can join us in this great culminating event.

PRAIRIE SCHOOL PRESENTS...

"CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD."

FRIDAY DECEMBER 16, 2011

8:15 A.M. - KINDERGARTEN

9:15 A.M. - FIRST

10:15 A.M. - SECOND

NOON - THIRD

1:15 P.M. FOURTH



\*\*\*THIS IS A DRESS UP DAY FOR STUDENTS.



### Thank-you Target!

#### "Take Charge of Education"

Prairie Elementary received a donation of \$1422.25 from the Target program "Take Charge of Education."

This donation is made possible through the support of our families when you use their REDcard for purchases.

Target donates up to 1% of the purchases to the designated school.

This is a very generous donation!



### Bring in those Pop Tabs

We have over 300,000 tabs collected. We will collect all school year with the hopes of hitting one million for the Ronald McDonald House.

**No School**

October 21

**2 Hour Early Release**

October 26 (12:40)

**No school**

October 27 & 28

### Fire Safety Week

Firefighters will visit classrooms to talk about fire safety on Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. Kindergarten classes will visit the fire station on Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>.

## Birthday Sundaee Party



Mr. Kaminski will be celebrating birthdays with ice cream sundaes on **Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>**. Kindergarten through Grade 4 students will enjoy sundaes at 1:00 p.m. Summer birthdays are celebrated as follows: June in December, July in January and August in February. Parents are welcome to join your child for his/her birthday sundae. Mr. Kaminski will be having a separate birthday celebration for the Early Childhood students at a later date.

Future dates:      November 29      December 13      January 31      February 28      March 20      April 24      May 29

### Birthday Books

Student birthdays are included in morning announcements and the children are invited to the office to pick out a book provided by the Prairie PTO. Thanks to the PTO for providing such a great gift!

## From the Health Office...

Share a toy, share a slide  
Share the feelings deep inside,  
But never share a hat or comb,  
Or lice could make your head their home.



Poem from [www.headlice.org](http://www.headlice.org) (check this website out)

Anyone can get head lice. It is not from poor hygiene or neglect. Lice do not jump or fly. However, they are easily spread from person to person through direct head-to-head contact or indirect contact with objects such as combs, brushes, hats, and scarves.

Head lice are tiny insects about the size of sesame seeds that live only on humans. They move quickly when exposed to light, making them difficult to see. You may only be able to find nits, which are the lice eggs. Nits are tiny, yellowish oval specks that are firmly glued to the hair shaft. Nits can often be confused with dandruff, but unlike dandruff, a nit will not easily fall off the hair. If you can blow or flick it, it is not a nit. Nits are usually found behind the ears or at the back of the neck.

Remind your children about the importance of not sharing combs, hats, brushes, scarves, etc. Watch for signs of lice, such as frequent head scratching. Check your child's hair regularly. Prevention can protect our kids from exposure to the chemicals in lice shampoos.

If you discover your child has lice, please notify the health office. We will help guide you through the treatment information that can be confusing during a stressful time for your family. Besides using a lice shampoo and cleaning the environment, removing lice and nits with a special comb is essential. There is a great video at [www.headlice.org/video](http://www.headlice.org/video) about how to do this effectively.

Please contact our school nurse, Katie Homar at 209-9950, if you would like more information.



## Safety in the Crosswalks

It has been brought to our attention by several parents and a few of our fourth grade safety patrollers that some "cars" are ignoring the safety patrol stop signs and proceeding through intersections before the patroller or children are back on the curb. This is a dangerous situation and I want to avoid a child getting hurt and someone from receiving a traffic citation. I know it's hectic in the morning around our building but I ask that you please consider the safety of those who walk to school. Safety patrollers and the adult crossing guard have been instructed to take down the license plate numbers of those who ignore the signs by entering the crosswalk while it is still occupied. The plate number will be given to the police who will in turn contact the offenders who may be issued a citation. Again, please proceed cautiously around school crosswalks and help keep our students safe!

## Safety in the Unloading Zone

The following situations have been creating an unsafe environment for our students in the unloading zone. Please consider the safety of our students.

### Cars are not allowed to be unattended

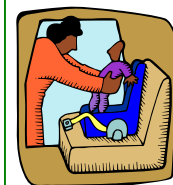
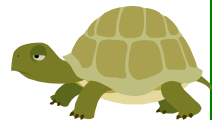
in the student-unloading zone during school hours.



### Parents are to park in a parking stall

and not in the parent loop. In the past cars have even double parked in the parent loop creating extremely dangerous conditions.

Please remember to drive slowly. Cars zooming into and out of the parking lot create dangerous situations.



Younger siblings should not be left unattended with the cars running while parents are inside the school.

**Let's make our school as safe as possible!**



## Business Sought For Adopt A Classroom Program

Local businesses are being asked to adopt a classroom to help promote the development of good character in our students. An adopted classroom brings an opportunity for the school to partner with the community. Each adopter can decide how often and how much time to spend with their adopted classroom. It can be once a week, once a month, once a semester or even once a year.

Adopting a classroom does not have to cost a business or organization anything but your time. You can be a guest speaker and talk about your occupation, or hobby, read to the students, offer a field trip to your business, or donate something for the classroom. Again, you can decide how much you want to contribute.

Why should a business consider adopting a classroom? When you hire employees, what is most important to you—excellent grades in school or positive attitude, work ethic, honesty and respect? Personnel directors will tell you that the key predictors of an employee's job success and retention are the character traits, not levels of knowledge. Yes, grades are important, but if you can find potential employees who are honest, dependable, cooperative, and responsible, you can teach them the job.

Where do young people learn these traits? Hopefully, at home, but not always. Prairie Elementary has incorporated character traits (positive attitude, hard work, honesty, and respect) into every aspect of our school day.

How does character apply in the workplace?

\*Positive Attitude: belief in excellence, responsible, positive thinking, self motivation

\*Hard Work: self discipline, perseverance, work ethic, commitment

\*Respect: tolerance, empathy, cooperation

\*Honesty: trustworthy, fairness, moral behavior

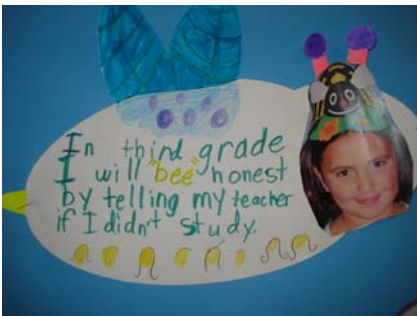
Please consider Adopting a Classroom. Please call Jo Howard at 849-2206 or email [jhoward@waunakee.k12.wi.us](mailto:jhoward@waunakee.k12.wi.us) to get more information and to pick a classroom.

## One, Two, Three...



## We Waun-a-Bee ...

### Honest...



### Nice...



### Happy and Positive.....



## Four, Five, Six...



## Here's our Picks...

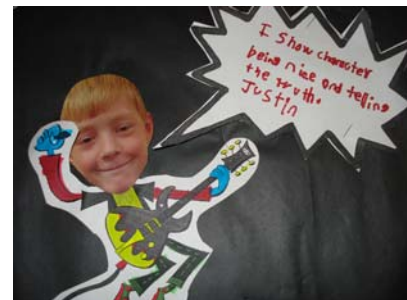
### Be Respectful...



### Choose to Share...



### Be nice and tell the truth...



# Character Counts

## Character Education Week (Oct 16-22)

Special activity schedule:

**Monday Oct 17-** Character Makes Life Great (everyone wear school T shirt)

**Tuesday Oct 18-**Character Counts (everyone is encouraged to wear a shirt with a number)

**Wednesday Oct 19-**Color our World with Character (coloring contest K-2 and activity sheet about character for grades 3-4; and all school color day )

K--wear black

1--wear blue

2--wear white

3--wear red

4--wear purple

staff--wear yellow

gold

**Thursday, Oct 20-**Hats Off to Character (everyone can wear a hat) there will be a contest for smallest, biggest, most unusual


**Friday, Oct 21-** No school on Friday


Thank you for all that you do to help build character.





## Why Character Matters?


A headmaster told this story to his students: When he was a boy, above the door to the main classroom building, was a sign with the following words:

 e careful of your thoughts, for your thoughts become your words.

 e careful of your words, for your words become your deeds.

 e careful of your deeds, for your deeds become your habits.

 e careful of your habits, for your habits become your character.

 e careful of your character, for your character becomes your destiny.

Steven Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, said it best "to do well, you must do good. And to do good, you must first be good."

Prairie Elementary is making the development of good character a priority. We want our students to have good character, to make good choices, and to be able to survive, endure and to handle misfortune. What are the key components of our character education initiative?

1. **Our touchstone** is what we stand for. It expresses our shared values and aspirations of our school: "At Prairie Elementary, through learning and laughter, we choose to have a positive attitude, to work hard, to be honest, and to be respectful."

2. **Our motto:** It's the Prairie Way! We all model and teach these character traits in everything we do.

3. **Continual evaluation:** Staff has been attending the Wisconsin State Character conference for the last five years. We have won two Promising Practices Awards, these are programs that other schools have used to create similar programs at their schools, and we were named Honorable Mention as a State School of Character. We have given school climate surveys which indicate character is alive and well at Prairie Elementary.

Our character education program also includes our families. Your support and encouragement is greatly appreciated. We are pleased that many of you have adopted Kelso's choices for your home problem solving methods. We have many Families of Character. Our PTO has been very supportive also. It just goes to show, that it does take a village to raise a child of character.

