Tuckahoe Times

September 2018

Principal Pascal's Perspective...

Welcome Back!

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year and the first issue of Tuckahoe Times! We publish the first Monday of each month, with some occasional variations due to holidays. Links to the newsletter are sent through School Messenger, on the Tuckahoe web page, and also on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

We had a great first week of school, and I have enjoyed seeing all our Sliders return and begin in their new classrooms. There was such a positive energy throughout the building, and kids seemed happy to see their friends and begin making new ones. This past Friday we held our annual Back to School Assembly, welcoming all the new members to the Tuckahoe family and reviewing school expectations. We continue to operate under the framework of our three R's, **Respect, Responsibility,** and **Remembering the Rights of Others**. We've started the year right where we left off, reinforcing with students the importance of performing random acts of kindness. We're promoting the idea that doing kind things for others not only makes the recipient feel good, but makes you feel good as well. As a complement to this, we're all excited to begin working with the Positivity Project (P2) this year. Some teams reference this in their sections on the next few pages, and more information can be found on page 5.

Other schoolwide plans and initiatives for the year build upon those begun last year. The Discovery Schoolyard's outdoor learning spaces look fantastic, thanks in large part to the PTA's generous support, the work of Schoolyard Assistant Andrea Kaplowitz and her crew, and the incredible efforts of our Outdoor Learning Coordinator, Ms. Egan. We are well equipped to facilitate students' use of the outdoors as a context for learning and plan to continue and expand our Schoolyard Stewards and Expeditions programming this year. In addition, one of our 5th grade School Service groups, the Green Team, will work with Ms. Egan to identify and complete additional projects to support Tuckahoe's long standing Exemplary Project.

We'd like to welcome our newest staff members to the Tuckahoe Family!

Debra Blackstone, 3rd Grade
Kory Bradley, Social Worker
Kristin Brynsvold, Librarian
Jack Magill, Pre-K Assistant
Sarah Parrish, Reading Teacher
Christine Zelanek, Psychologist

We are also excited to continue our partnership with our sister school in Uganda, Matuwa Primary. Our annual 5K, in partnership with Arlington Traditional School, will take place on September 23 to support Arlington Academy of Hope, the umbrella organization for the Uganda partnerships.

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We welcomed 11 **Preschoolers** back to Tuckahoe a few days ago! We are settling into our new classroom and getting used to being part of the schoolwide community. The first few weeks will find us learning a new building, going to specials, and exploring all of the wonderful outdoor opportunities that Tuckahoe has to offer. We are looking forward to being included in the Positivity Project and practicing the guiding principle of "Other People Matter" each and every day in our classroom. We will provide updates as the year progresses. Back To School Night is Wednesday 9/12; looking forward to seeing as many families as possible!

We had a great first week of **Kindergarten!** Students have made new friends, met all their new teachers, and played many new games! The kids have been busy learning the expectations and procedures of the classroom, and of Tuckahoe as a whole. For example, in the mornings all Tuckahoe students are encouraged to read a book in the hallway as they wait for the morning bell to ring. Please help your child pack a book in his or her backpack so he or she can practice reading in the morning (looking at the pictures is great, too!) Also this week, we have been playing many new games to get to know each other better. We look forward to sharing our "me bags" and building our classroom community over the coming weeks. Lastly, please make sure you are checking your child's daily folder every evening and sending it back to school each morning! This is how we share completed student work as well as other important information. Looking forward to a great year full of fun, learning, and discovery!

Welcome to **First Grade**! All four first grade classrooms had a fantastic first week of school. We played games and participated in activities to help us get to know each other. We also discovered that we all have lots of things in common. In social studies, we made rules for our classroom and discussed how they help keep us safe and learning. Our author of the month is Kevin Henkes, and we have enjoyed many of his books already. The book Chrysanthemum was a great book for learning to appreciate ourselves for whom we are. It is also a book we used to talk about being kind. Ask your child to tell you how Chrysanthemum's heart got crumpled every time a classmate hurt her feelings. We created an anchor chart for ways to smooth crumpled hearts. You can make them feel better, but they are still crumpled, so it is better to always be kind. We are thrilled to be forming our new community in first grade!

Welcome **Second Grade** students and families! It has been a BRIGHT start in our classrooms as you will see in photos and authentic "shaded" portraits of our young learners. We spent the first days sorting through supplies, getting to know each other, and exploring our classrooms as well as our broader environment. Students were excited to learn that they are now the seniors of lower elementary. We aim to shine in this role as models for our younger Tuckahoe citizens. Topics of instruction and exploration this month include: finding examples of math in our daily lives, building rules and citizenship, and learning to be good readers and writers who "grow like beanstalks" each day. The 2nd grade teachers are excited to take on new and engaging initiatives such as the Positivity Project (P2) with our students. We are also committed to the campaign to spread kindness in our responsive classrooms. As our new and beautiful mural proudly proclaims: At Tuckahoe We are Kind! This is a hope and dream that we all share for our 2nd graders as well as our entire Tuckahoe family.

Welcome to **Third Grade**! We were so excited to meet all of our new students this week and to begin our year of learning and growing together. We are also excited to welcome our new teaching teammate, Ms. Blackstone. In all the classes we have spent time getting to know each other through a variety of different games and activities. We have spent time reviewing the expectations for all Tuckahoe Sliders: Respect, Responsibility and Remembering the rights of others, as well as refreshing our memories of how we behave in the hallways and cafeteria. One of the best things about 3rd grade is that we now get to go out to Tuckahoe Park for recess. In order to keep everyone safe on the equipment, we took time to review the safety rules outside as well. Some of our time this first week has also been spent reading some fun books in class and getting to check out some new ones from the library. This year we will continue to start our day with silent reading in the hallway before school starts. When we went to the library we selected at least one book to keep in our backpacks, so it is available each morning. There is a lot of fun learning ahead of us all this year and we are excited for this new journey together. We look forward to seeing all the parents at Back to School Night on Wednesday to share some of our plans for the year ahead!

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Department NEWS

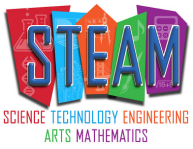
We are so excited to be back at Tuckahoe teaching our amazing **Artists**! We are off to a fabulous start already. We've kicked off the year with artistic activities that have given us a chance to get to know our students. Students have also been getting to know their classmates by discussing their artwork with one another. This year we will be seeing our artists twice a week, which will allow for lots of time to explore a wide variety of mediums, processes, and styles of artwork! We are also collecting items such as wipes, toilet paper rolls, egg cartons, and reusable containers. If you have any you would like to contribute, please send them in with your student. We always appreciate donations!

How great it was to see the building come alive with the students' return! We are excited to start making **Music** with our students and help them build musical skills through the singing games, movement activities, folk dances, creative projects, and hands-on time with instruments. During the first few weeks, we will focus on community-building activities. Students will learn a variety of name games, perform body awareness activities, and work on listening/analyzing skills. Multicultural music has always been a part of our curriculum. The students will enjoy learning singing games from different cultures, exploring world musical instruments, listening to folk tales, and more. We look forward to many musical adventures with your kids and hope to enrich the lives of our students through a variety of musical experiences!

WELCOME BACK to all our new & veteran families to Tuckahoe! We are all fired up for this upcoming school year. Here's a quick overview for what's ahead in **PE** for this September. All grade levels are working on signals, procedures and PE Expectations. Grades 3–5 will be instructed on Cooperative Skill activities with Team Building games mixed in. Grades K-2 will be primarily working on spatial awareness, pathways for moving, and working in groups with partners. As a reminder, students should bring a water bottle to PE class, as we take full advantage of the large field space we have available to us at Tuckahoe as much as possible! Please remember that for safety, and in accordance with APS Physical Education Guidelines for Dress and Hygiene, students in elementary school PE must wear sneakers designed to provide support and prevent injuries. Also, it is recommended that students not wear jewelry as this could impede safe participation. Looking ahead, all 4th grade students will be swimming in mid-October. These dates will be October 11th–October 24th. Please be on the lookout for field trip information and paperwork. Finally, feel free to swing by the Tuckahoe Library on Back to School Night to meet our Physical Education Staff. We look forward to greeting and chatting with you!

Happy September! It's been a great week of welcoming students back to the **Library**, checking out books, and getting to know everyone. Our Sliders have been eager to pick out books, and we've seen lots of good reading skills—we can tell reading took place over the summer! In September, our younger grades will get to explore the library and have story time, while our older grades will be learning how to search the catalog and locate materials. We're excited to be getting some new books and are enjoying our new circulation desk laptops and library signage. Looking forward to a great year!

¡*Hola*! In **Spanish** class, students are learning about what to expect during our time together. We are also working on building a positive classroom environment that is most conducive to language learning. You should soon be able to ask your student to explain *Dame 5* (our five class expectations) for being an active listener in Spanish! We will soon begin discussing Hispanic Heritage Month, which begins on September 15th. As is the case in other subjects, students come to class with varying levels of proficiency and previous exposure to Spanish. Our goal is working to differentiate instruction to ensure that <u>all</u> students are consistently challenged in class, to meet their needs at whatever their current level of language mastery. Please look for an upcoming letter about the FLES program and our grading system in your student's Friday folder. We are looking forward to getting to know your students this year!



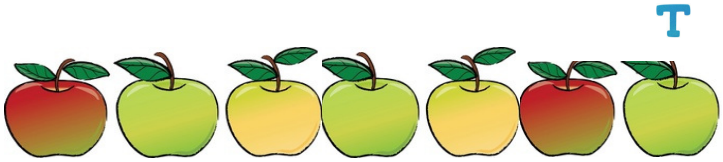
What an exciting start to the school year as our community got to see the amazing improvements in Tuckahoe's beloved Courtyard Garden! Thanks to PTA support, the pond and waterfall were rebuilt over the summer, a gorgeous bridge with carved animals installed, and a new portico and shed added. Thanks to Andrea Kaplowitz for overseeing these projects! Classes have already started using this outdoor learning space. Big thanks also to the summer volunteers who helped keep the schoolyard gardens weeded and watered. The beds are overflowing with flowers, herbs, cotton, and food crops for student use! I am looking forward to gardening and making STEAM connections with students in all grades. Please consider coming to one of the community garden workdays this year. Details & SignUp: https://goo.gl/M4cyrF.

Classroom News *continued from page 2...*

We are so excited for this school year in **Fourth Grade!** We are starting off our year by building community, reviewing expectations, and reacquainting ourselves with school rules. We are setting Hopes and Goals for the year and getting to know one another. We are also starting to discuss all the responsibilities 4th graders have and setting ourselves up to be more independent as the year goes on. We have a busy month ahead. In social studies, you can look forward to learning about Virginia geography. We'll explore our solar system in science class, starting with a fun field trip to the Planetarium this week. In math, we are working on math talk, problem solving skills, and place value. We plan to instill a love of reading and appreciation of different genres all year. Make sure to get those 30 minutes of reading in every day! We are ready to grow our brains! Instrumental music begins this week on Wednesday. Participating in instrumental music comes with the added responsibility of making up missed content. It is the student's responsibility to pick up missed work and check in with content teachers after missing a class due to instrumental music lessons. Fourth grade is looking forward to a wonderful year! Tuckahoe Rocks!

The **Fifth Grade** team is extremely excited to get the new year started! During the first week, the students have done many different community-building activities, both as a grade level and in their homerooms. The remainder of the month will be dedicated to working on summer book reading projects, studying the scientific method, reviewing math facts, and learning about early humans. Be sure to ask them about the science experiments they've done and about their summer book project. We have many different hands-on activities planned for the first month, and we are eager to get started. Next month kicks off with our overnight field trip to the Outdoor Lab, and we're very excited about it! For more information on what is going on in our classrooms, please refer to the monthly calendar sent home with your child. Please be sure to have your children show you how they access Google Classroom from home.

Follow us on twitter at @TuckahoeGrade5 for pictures and moments captured during your 5th grade student's last year at Tuckahoe!



PTA

Welcome back from the PTA! We hope the school year is already off to a smooth start. As you transition back to school, we'd like to say hello and provide some information and resources to help you throughout the year. Visit our NEW website to learn more: https://tuckahoepta.membershiptoolkit.com/home. Aside from keeping families informed of things going on at school and in the community, we also sponsor and fund a variety of activities and projects.

Thanks to the generous support of our families last year, we were able to fund 27 teacher grants, teacher training, the Courtyard pond renovation, and much, much more.

In 2018-2019 we have several focus areas:

- Improving PTA communications with the help of our new website
- Creating volunteer opportunities for our families
- Building the Tuckahoe community through regular parents-only social engagement opportunities
- Continued funding for teacher grants and trainings
- Ensuring broader volunteer support for the traditional events we all know and love
- Sharing good stories in our weekly newsletter and social media so families are aware of the accomplishments led by the amazing teachers and staff at the school!

We Need Your Help! We run entirely on volunteer support! We can't pull off any of the activities and initiatives highlighted above without you. We have dedicated volunteers (THANK YOU!!) who have been amazing in doing jobs both big and small. But, like you, they have busy schedules. More volunteers would mean that we can spread out the work so each activity is manageable. It's easy to help! Go to our Volunteer Form on the website above to learn more and sign up. Even if you can't volunteer right now, you can still help! Here's how:

- Come to PTA events and activities (your kids will thank you!)
- Join the PTA and donate to the no-fuss fundraiser!
- Come to PTA meetings!

Our kids go to an amazing school. But even so, there are limits on what it can provide. The PTA fills in the gaps for educational opportunities for teachers and students. We all want our kids to grow academically and personally. Now is the time to build their foundation for the years ahead. We hope you'll join us in working toward that goal.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with ideas, questions or ways we can be helpful to you!

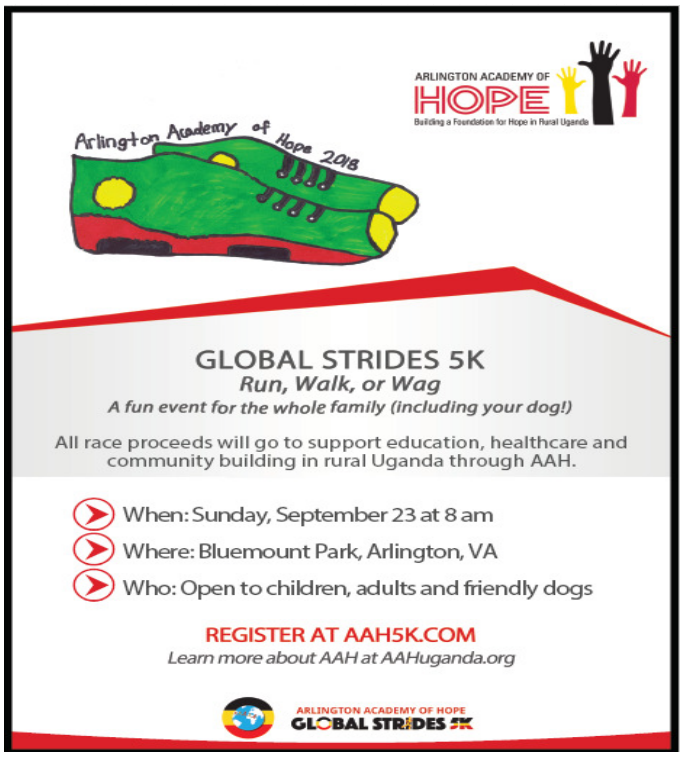
Allison Glatfelter, Tuckahoe PTA President
TuckahoePTAPresident@gmail.com

Perspective *continued from page 1...*

This year students will continue to write letters to the Matuwa students before Uganda schools head out for their summer break. The Tuckahoe community has been so generous in helping to support the Matuwa community. We now have about 30 Matuwa students being sponsored by Tuckahoe families. Sponsorship costs $400 a year and funding goes to providing a student with basic supplies, both educational like backpacks, and also boots and shoes. Funding is also used to help subsidize the student lunch program. Sponsors and their students exchange letters three times a year, so that a more ongoing, personalized relationship can be established. If you are interested in learning more or beginning a sponsorship with a Matuwa student, we have information in the main office.

We have gotten off to a great start this year, and I anticipate a wonderful year for our Sliders. As was the message last year, I believe we are all more successful when we maintain open communication with one another. As questions or concerns arise, please contact your child's teacher. More often than not, issues can be resolved through a conversation. Our staff is committed to doing what is best for our children to the best of our ability. Remembering that we share that common goal with you can go a long way to help us work together productively. I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday evening at 7:00pm at Back to School Night!

Mitch Pascal



THE POSITIVITY PROJECT

We are entering into Year 1 as a partner school with the nonprofit Positivity Project organization. Already a successful program in hundreds of schools, this should be a perfect complement to all that we're already doing in terms of practicing kindness toward and appreciating one another. The overriding purpose of the Positivity Project (P2) is to empower youth to build positive relationships. At its core, the philosophy of the program is to instill in children the "Other People Matter" mindset.

P2 is rooted in the research of positive psychology. This has generated evidence of 24 strengths existing throughout time and in all cultures of the world, indicating that all 24 character strengths exist in every individual. Ranging from bravery and forgiveness to integrity and gratitude, these character strengths are the foundation of The Positivity Project's model. Making children aware that every one of them, and every other person, has all 24 character strengths, helps them better understand why everyone is different and how to appreciate those differences. Unlike our height, weight, or skin color, character is something that can't be seen with the naked eye. Therefore, understanding and valuing it, especially in other people, requires a framework of consistent reflection and discussion.

All partner schools follow a standard calendar throughout the year, teaching students about one of the 24 strengths over the course of a week with developmentally appropriate resources. You will likely hear more about these from your children's teachers and the kids themselves. There are a series of one page strength descriptions that we will be putting on our web site along with the calendar, so that you can see what the kids are learning about each strength and have some consistent language to discuss at home.

A quick overview of the Positivity Project and its origin is discussed in this short video clip.

We are excited to learn along with our students and families as we participate this first year. We're looking forward to our kids further building successful relationships with others, learning more about their own strengths, and how to appreciate those in others. Stay tuned, more to come!

The Positivity Project can be followed on social media, @PosProject on Twitter and Facebook.

- September 12: Back to School Night, 7:00PM
- September 13: School Lockdown **DRILL**
- September 14: Slider Spirit Friday
- September 21: Slider Spirit Friday
- September 23: Arl. Acad. Of Hope 5K, 8:00AM
- September 28: Slider Spirit Friday
- October 1: October Tuckahoe Times Published

Thought of the Month:

"Goodness is about character-integrity, honesty, kindness, generosity, moral courage, and the like. More than anything, it is about how we treat other people."

~Dennis Prager writer

What do I do if I have a concern about something my child says is happening in class?

This is actually not uncommon at some point over the course of the year. Our recommendation is always to begin by contacting the teacher. Sometimes a student reports information that has another side to it. Sometimes something in class is misunderstood or misperceived. Sometimes something happened that does need to be remedied or corrected. The key from our perspective is open communication, approaching concerns from a mutually respectful, rather than adversarial, standpoint. This goes a long way to keeping everyone calm, not defensive, and productive to address the concern. If, after working with the teacher, administrative intervention is needed, do contact us. In an attempt to be responsive, either Dr. Legagneur or I may contact parents to discuss concerns. As co-leaders of the building, either one of us will do our best to assist.

So I'm new to Tuckahoe. What happens on Back to School Night?

Back to School Night is an annual "adults only" event that allows parents the opportunity to meet their child's teacher, see the classroom, and learn what the year will bring in terms of curriculum and expectations. At Tuckahoe the night begins in the gym at 7:00 where Mr. Pascal will introduce the staff. There is a short, but important PTA meeting, where the primary business is adopting the budget for the year. Parents can then visit classrooms, where teachers present the same 20-minute session twice, so that families with more than one child can attend both. The evening wraps up by 8:30. Overflow parking will be available at Bishop O'Connell HS.

Tuckahoe Spirit Fridays are here! Students are invited to wear any Tuckahoe gear they have. Don't have any yet? No worries! Wear blue & yellow to show your Slider Pride!

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