

Maple Street School
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Michael Bessette, Principal



Memorandum

To: Mr. Chamberlin and Members of the Board
From: Michael Bessette
Date: January 28, 2011
Re: Principal's Report

Mr. Chamberlin and Members of the Board:

In keeping with Mr. Chamberlin's request, this month's Principal's Report is focused upon service, and the impact service has on the staff and students of Maple Street School.

At MSS, service can best be described as "service learning," which in my opinion encompasses two distinct branches of thought. These branches, experiential learning and community service, are intertwined and offer MSS students opportunities to create positive ties with both the school community and the larger communities that encompass the Hopkinton School District. At its best, service learning at the school helps kids and staff to create community partnerships that emphasize links to curriculum, reflection on the part of the students, extension of the student's "voice", collaboration, and civic responsibility. While the projects that engage students in service learning vary, all strive to connect and resonate with out extended theme of the 4 "Bs" – Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be a Community –our school motto and an evolution of student learning first encountered at Harold Martin School.

For some examples of student service learning projects one need only look to some of the recent and current work occurring at MSS. Members of the Peer Leadership group are working hard to create Valentine's Day boxes for community seniors. The contents of these boxes are collected from the children's classes and organized into wonderful gifts that help to brighten the day of many of Hopkinton and Contoocook's seniors that are "shut-in" during the winter months. Students learn organizational skills and work collaboratively to develop plans on how to collect and distribute the materials effectively. Other examples of student service may be seen in the work of the Team of Tomorrow who is currently working on several service learning projects that are positively impacting their school community. These projects include the production and filming of a anti-bullying video for their peers, the construction of a school climate newsletter to inform the community of climate work, and the construction of a "talking wall" to help showcase data and progress on climate building at the school. All of these projects give back directly to the school community and help the children to nurture an understanding of the kids ability to make a positive difference in their school experience through direct service and engagement.

I would also be remiss if I did not mention the multiple food and clothing drives that the students have completed this year, helping to generate significant amounts of food and resources to support the town food pantry. Students and staff collaborated to gather toys for disadvantaged children during the holiday season, have sponsored and supported the planting and care of a sentinel tree to monitor and safeguard their community from Asian Long-horned Beetles, and have donated time, energy and effort to help clean up their environment through creating artwork submitted to national art contests.

Indeed, service is a strong component of Maple Street School and the MSS staff is proud of the hard work and learning that the children engage in to help others and to live up to the meaning in our motto.