



# Horizon Elementary School

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## Principal's Post



December 2018

Dear Horizon Families,

Can you believe it is already December! The school year is flying by, and the amount of amazing learning going on in our classrooms is truly worth mentioning. Here are just a few recent highlights:

- A Kindergarten sweetie came to us in August knowing none of her letters or sounds. This week, she came to my office to celebrate that she now knows ALL of her uppercase, most lowercase, and most sounds. HOORAY for this hard-working little girl. She's on her way!
- In 3rd grade math, a small group of students were told they'd be learning some more challenging multiplication (2-digit by 1-digit). At first, a couple of them verbalized their fears, worried that it would be too hard. But at the end, after lots of good instruction and practice, one of them looked up and said, "Well, that wasn't so hard after all. It's fun!" Yes! These kids didn't let their worries get them down.
- 4th graders are learning to Code in Science classes. They are using Scratch and Tynker software to Code and create their own video games. I was able to actually play a few of their games in Mrs. Lira's classroom...and they worked! What a great achievement for these technological leaders of the future!

We celebrate the fact that hard work and effort pay off...and that learning new things is genuinely FUN!

The month of December will be focused on the Lifelines of Generosity and Kindness. Please talk to your children about ways they can be generous and kind to others.

**Generosity:** (of a person) showing a readiness to give more of something, as money or time, than is strictly necessary or expected; showing kindness toward others

**Kindness:** the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate  
We can all be generous and kind. It doesn't cost a cent. Thank you for being generous with your time, talents, and service to Horizon. We are always grateful for the support parents give us. Thank you!

*Mrs. Tressa Decker, Principal*

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## Optimal Learning for Students Starts at Home... Tips for Parents

A team of teachers and administrators recently attended the conference, “***Social-Emotional Learning & Disruptive Behaviors in the Classroom.***” Educators learned valuable information and strategies to apply in the classroom. In addition, we gained essential knowledge and information about practices for families to incorporate to ensure their children feel **safe and secure at home**. We are pleased to share the following information that may help you understand and help your children as they grow into adulthood.

### Facts About Stress, Anxiety, and Trauma

- All children experience some level of stress in their lives. Our goal as parents/educators is to teach them coping strategies so they can become **resilient** people who feel in control of themselves, despite the circumstances surrounding them.
- Stress, Anxiety and Trauma in childhood affect everyone differently. Some children show no outward signs of distress, while others are unable to control their behavior.
- Stress, Anxiety, and Trauma can affect cognitive development, learning, physical health, and the ability to form healthy relationships.
- Schools are not mental health facilities. Despite all that teachers try to accomplish through interventions and planning, sometimes outside professional help is necessary.

### The Brain and Learning

- There are 3 areas of the brain that affect cognitive and social-emotional development, behavior, learning, and physical health. They are:
  - **Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)** - the THINKING CENTER responsible for rational thought, problem solving, planning and personality. When it is strong and functioning, we can make good decisions and be aware of others. *This is the part of the brain we want students to be using fully at school each day!*
  - **Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC)** – the EMOTION REGULATION CENTER. When it is strong, we are able to manage difficult thoughts and emotions without becoming overwhelmed by them. *Children with a weak ACC struggle to manage their thoughts and emotions. When emotions and thoughts are overwhelming, the PFC works less efficiently.*
  - **Amygdala** – the FEAR CENTER. Receives all information and is always looking for danger. Senses fear and detects danger. This part of the brain is so powerful it can cause the other parts of the brain to be less functional. When a child’s Amygdala is on overdrive, she is very sensitive to all senses (loud voices, touch, etc.) and as a result has a difficult time thinking, making good decisions, and is focusing on an escape (fight or flight). *\*People will go to great lengths to escape in order to control their Amygdala. These are the disruptive behaviors and sometimes destructive attitudes and actions children display. When the Amygdala is activated, the PFC can not work efficiently.*

### How Parents Can Help

**Trauma** can be defined as any event that has a negative physical and/or emotional impact on a child. An event may be traumatic for one child in the family but not their sibling because every child receives and reacts to information differently. Therefore, it makes sense that each child will have different ways of coping with stress, anxiety, and trauma. Below are some suggestions that will better enable children cope with the little stressors in life as well as the bigger, more impactful events and/or traumas (including moving to a new home).

- Provide a **calm home** that includes a **routine** (for security and stability). Examples are eating a meal together regularly, a bedtime routine, and cuddle time (time to talk, share and just be available to each child).
- Ensure children are **well-rested** (a set bedtime), **well-fed** with nutritious foods, and are **bathed and dressed appropriately** (for the weather) each day.
- **Avoid anything that can cause conflict in the mornings** (completing homework, issuing consequences for bad behavior, etc.) Try to address these things the night before, so the day can start off on a positive note.
- Provide opportunities for **exercise and extra-curricular activities**. Regular physical activity releases serotonin in the brain, which relieves stress. Participating in activities of interest with children of the same age builds social skills and healthy friendships outside the home.

## Please dress your child for the weather!

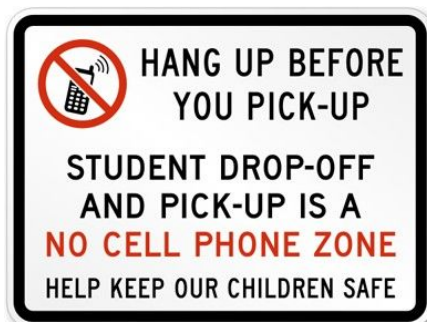
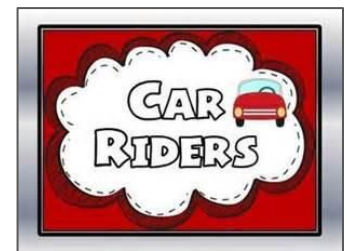
It's that time of year when it is now too cold for shorts, t-shirts, and bare legs. Remember, we go outside for recess every day unless it is raining or BELOW ZERO, so your child should be dressed accordingly. When the snow comes, children must have a winter coat that zips, hat, gloves, snow pants and winter boots in order to play in the snow at recess. Children without proper winter gear will play on the blacktop only.

## COLD WEATHER



## CAR RIDER REMINDERS:

1. Please stay in line at all times, unless a traffic assistant with a flashing light signals or tells you that you can move your car out of line.
2. Please put your cell phone down during drop off and pick up times. We are trying to avoid collisions in line.
3. If it is 7:50 or after, you must walk your child(ren) to the office to sign in, because our supervised drop off at Door B has ended. **If there are no adults Outside and Door B is closed, please do not send your child up to the building unaccompanied. This is a major safety concern.**
4. Make sure that your child is ready to get out of the car as soon as you come to a complete stop along the sidewalk. Kids should NOT be eating breakfast as they get out of the car. They need to have their coat on and all belongings ready to go when it's time to get out.



This will help all students and staff to remain safe and get into the building in a timely fashion so that learning can begin. Thank you!



**Lunch Account Balances** must be kept up. If your child's lunch account is in the negative, you will receive a notice. Please pay negative balances immediately. Thank you!



## PreK News

Preschool introduced new centers this month in our GROCERY store theme. Our centers for our grocery theme are:

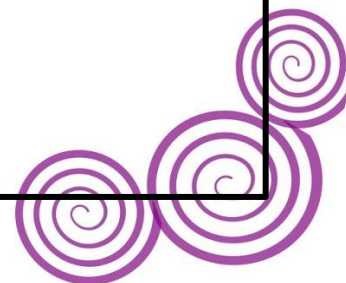
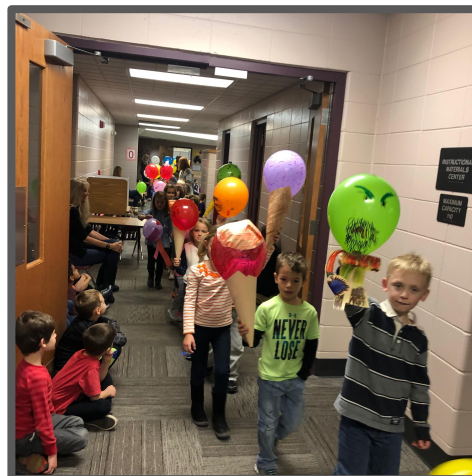
orange center=checkout  
red center=floral department  
blue center=produce  
brown center=delivery center  
green center=deli  
purple center=bakery

Our centers help us learn lots of math and literacy concepts in a fun way!



## Kindergarten News

Kindergarten had so much fun this month. We celebrated Thanksgiving by researching Turkeys in Writing and reading several Thanksgiving stories that helped us understand fantasy and reality during our Reading block. We ended our month with rotations. The kids traveled to different classrooms doing art projects, math games, STEM activities and learning about the history of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. For the first time in the history of Horizon, our Kindergarteners decorated balloons and put on a parade for the whole school! Seeing their "balloon floats" was so much fun!



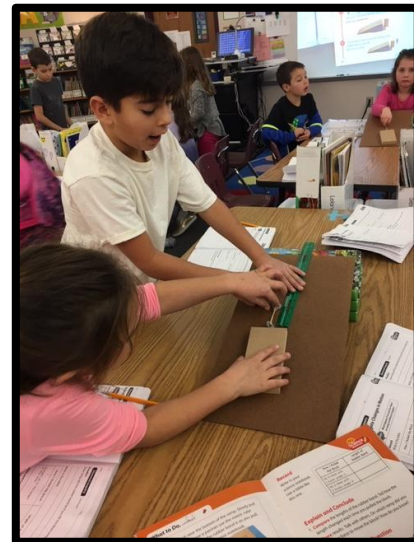
## Good News from First Grade

We have begun our measurement unit in math. First graders braved the snow and cold weather to learn about how the temperature change affects a thermometer. Part of our time was spent reading the temperature on a thermometer to the nearest 2 degrees.



## Second Grade News

The second graders are beginning to explore the science unit of Force and Motion. Students will be experimenting with various types of force and motion activities. This connects with their informational writing unit. They are learning to write like a scientist as they report their results and conclusions.



## Third Grade

Third grade students have been soaring above and beyond in a variety of ways throughout November! Students have enjoyed working through their informational writing pieces about airplanes following a field trip to the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo. Third graders have also learned to apply math as some are beginning to design their own dream house after learning about area. Art is another way that students are learning to express themselves, as well as follow directions to complete a project. Finally, students have begun to soar in Language Arts skills through competitions like Word Masters. We are thankful for all of the amazing opportunities that third graders have at Horizon!



### IMC News you can Use!

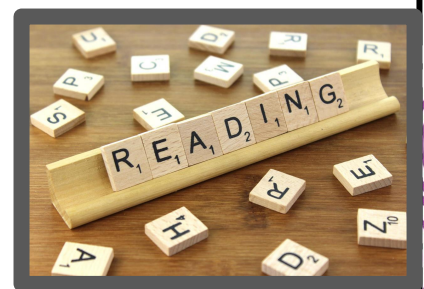
During the month of November, we focused on the lifeline of Gratitude. I would like to express my gratitude for the ability to read.

Learning to read changes your life forever. It gains you immediate access into the world of make-believe and a front row seat to the new discoveries of the day. It is **empowering and uplifting**. And definitely something to be grateful for.

The students we work with have reading levels all across the board and I can tell you that *no one understands the importance of reading more than those who can't read yet.*

I am grateful that not only can I read, but that I can read to others as well. It is an amazing thing to be able to do.

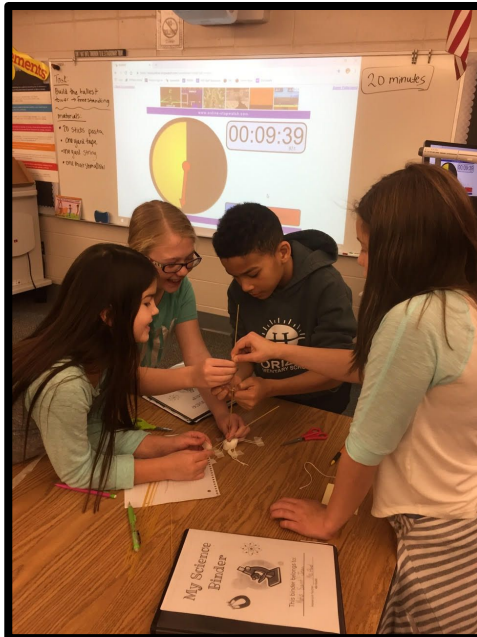
Please be sure to read with your child (or have your child read on their own) as much as possible at home. The only way to become a better reader is **TO READ**. The more you read, the better you get!



## 4th grade

Fourth Grade students have been using Project Lead the Way (PLTW) in their science rotations. PLTW is a platform for computer science, engineering and biomedical science that engages students in hands-on activities, projects and problems. In one class rotation, students have been working on the engineering process with building and design through simple and compound machines. The first day of class focuses on the design model: Ask, Explore, Model, Evaluate and Explain. Students work in groups to complete the challenge of building the tallest tower with limited resources and time constraints - we call this "The Marshmallow Challenge!"

By the end of the 6 week rotation, students make a final project of building a compound machine that needs to complete the task of safely moving an animal out of a moat at the zoo. They think and work as engineers - building and designing their own compound machine by following a list of criteria and constraints for the project. The 4th graders have been doing a wonderful job being little engineers!



## 5th grade

Most fifth grade students have an excess of energy, and they often hear teachers challenging them to calm down, slow down, or quiet down. In science, students are learning to save energy in another way. Working with resources from *Indiana Michigan Power*, Mr. Kline and Mr. McCaskill are teaching about saving resources and money by conservation practices. Each student will receive an energy kit to take home so they can try to put into practice what they learned in class. When we all limit our wasteful practices in one or two small ways, we can save up on our natural resources and have more energy for years to come.



## PE News

During this month students have been learning about the game of basketball, having some fun celebrating Thanksgiving and doing some practice e-learning assignments!

### Basketball:

Students in PE kicked off the month of November with a unit in Basketball. It was a short unit due to HONK rehearsals in the gym, but we had fun! We will visit basketball again during March Madness in the spring. Students in grades 3-5 will be holding their very own Elite Tournament! We can't wait!



### LGI-e-Learning:

Each grade level had the chance to go over our e-Learning practice lessons. ALL students 1st-5th grade were able to access their Canvas account on their chromebooks and complete a practice lesson. This year Mr. West (Music) and Mrs. Snoeyink (PE) will be uploading their e-learning lessons to **Canvas**. So if your student has Music or PE on a snow day, please be sure to have them log into Canvas to find their assignment. If you have any questions, be sure to email those teachers.

### Holiday Celebrations:

During the Thanksgiving unit, students played Turkey Tag, Capture the Turkey Tail and Family Feast. All grade levels really enjoyed Turkey Tag. They go crazy for such easy and simple games!

**In December, students will be learning different activities with a noodle and holiday glow bowling! It's going to be a great month!**





## Musical Notes

November was an exciting month in Horizon Music! Over 120 students in grades one through five performed the musical HONK. What a blessing to have a community and administration that is supportive of the arts and what they bring to the education process. Additionally, the Horizon Show Choirs have been gearing up for their upcoming Holiday program on **December 7th**. Mark your calendars now!



## Coming Events

December 3-7: SmArt Week

December 7: Show Choir Performs 6:30pm

December 8: Show Choir Performs at Heritage Square-1 pm

December 11: PTO **Adopt-A-Family** Gift Wrapping-6:30pm

December 12: Hearing Screening for 1st & 4th grades

December 19: **Winter** Classroom Celebrations

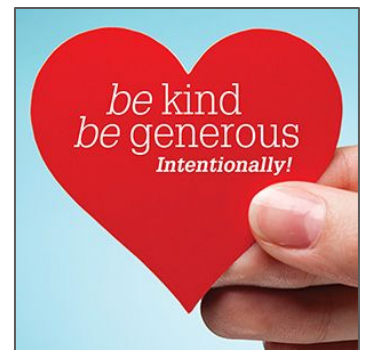
December 21: School-wide Sing-Along and Gift of Reading

December 24, 2018-January 6, 2019-Winter Recess **HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!**

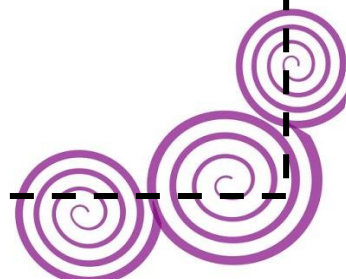
January 7-Classes Resume!

January 14-18, 2019: SmART Week

January 21, 2019--MLK Recess Day



dates  
to  
Remember



# Students OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to our NOVEMBER Students of the Month, who were recognized for demonstrating the Lifeline of **"GRATITUDE"**.

**Kindergarten:** Vieve Bengtsson, Zaina Chua, Braxton Wilkey, Blake Rousselow, Mason Kuczmanski

**1st Grade:** Cami Paiano, Andrew Balthes, Aashna Wilkes, Hunter Dorton, Simon Meeks

**2nd Grade:** Aiden Preniczny, Dyson Daly, Gabby Curry, Cecilia Bethel, Arina Kovrigina

**3rd Grade:** Ray Jaronik, Ethan Eyman, Bentley Baird, Jack Sagarsee

**4th Grade:** Makayla Devlin, Ava Ransberger, Ava Hurley, Savannah Sage, Chloe Osborne

**5th Grade:** Ellie Hemmerling, Megan Fisher, Noah Pressler, Riley Farkas



Kindergarten



1st Grade



2nd Grade



3rd Grade



4th Grade



5th Grade