



*Inspiring Minds
Empowering Achievement
Building Community*

GARDEN CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Primary School at Homestead

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Dr. Suzanne Viscovich

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Dear Parents,

Throughout the school year, I visit each of the classes to read books related to Social Emotional Learning. I started in September reading the book, Have You Filled a Bucket Today? by Carol McCloud, to teach students the expectations of Bucket Filling and not Bucket Dipping. After my read-aloud, each class created a book about what a Bucket Filler is, and a student's page is read on the announcements each day of the school year.

In October, I read the book Be Kind by Pat Zietlow Miller to each class to introduce our Homestead Theme, *Be the I in Kind*. Afterwards we took pictures of every student and staff member in front of the I to show that each one of us is dedicated to being the I in kind all year!

In December, I read, What Does It Mean to be Kind? by Rana D'Orio, the book that was selected by the PTA Decorating Committee to go along with our Kindness Theme. During my visits, I taught the children The Pledge of Kindness, which we say on the announcements every morning. As a follow up, each class made a book on how each student promised to be kind.

As we focus on Mental Health and Wellness as a district and school priority, this month, I visited classrooms to discuss and normalize all the different feelings we may experience and the various coping strategies. I used children's books Ruby's Worry and The Good Egg, gifted by the PTA, to begin the conversation. Teachers continue the conversation through various children's books. Through our discussions, we show children that having different feelings is ok and that it's what you do with them that's important, for example, who you can go to for help, and the coping strategies you may employ. Our teachers, social worker, and I will continue to use literature to help students identify and normalize their feelings and identify supports and coping strategies. Each morning, the children will do a visual check-in with their teachers of how they're feeling — happy, sad, worried, angry -, and then their teachers can help them with what to do with that feeling. The visuals will be available all day in every classroom for whenever needed for reference or conversation.

Thank you all for your continued support in our children's mental health and wellness.

Sincerely,

Dr. Suzanne Viscovich