

## MONONGALIA COUNTY DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION NEWSLETTER

### "ADVOCATE FOR RIGHTS"



## This month we celebrate advocacy and how it shaped the world we live in today

While there isn't an exact moment in history where one can pinpoint when advocacy began. A lot of people say advocacy can be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century in England. Jon Wilkes gets a lot of credit for being critical of the Treaty of Paris and the pro-abolition movement in England, which effectively ended Slavery in England.

Since that time advocacy has played an important role in our country. One can argue that we are where we are now in our country through the advocacy of others. Some of the important people and their advocacy throughout history are:

- Martin Luther King Jr. played a crucial role in the advocacy for civil rights.
- Cesar Chavez advocated for farm workers of all backgrounds and the poor working conditions they lived in and chemicals they were exposed to.

- Fred Korematsu advocated for his rights as an American after the government mandated anyone of Japanese descent be rounded into internment camps, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.
- Susan B. Anthony is best-known for her role in the women's suffrage movement during her time.
- Malala Yousafzai who defied the Taliban in Pakistan and demanded that girls be allowed to receive an education

These are just a few influential individuals throughout history and the advocacy that they have done. While we can say that we have come a long way as a nation/world one can also argue that as we continue to grow as a nation/world there is still advocacy that needs to be done.

It is important that we continue to teach our students about important events throughout history and how advocacy played a part in those events and will continue to play a role in how our country/world is shaped.

### February Observations

- Black History Month
- Random acts of Kindness Week (3<sup>rd</sup> week)

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### GUARDIAN CORNER

*The Guardian corner is optional reading for parents that are looking for additional resources or ideas at home. Monongalia county schools in only providing optional resources and respects everyone's differences*

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Helping your child understand what advocacy is and how to do it appropriately is an important skill for children to know and understand.

Why is self-advocacy so important? It is important to be able to express what you need, so that you can receive it. As people it is hard to read anyone's mind, so having the skill of self-advocacy is important so they can take it into adulthood.

Self-advocacy is the skill of expressing your mental, physical, or emotional needs, in order to actually get them met. Some people view it as the skill for asking for help.

There are three important parts of being able to advocate for yourself:

1. Understanding what your needs are
2. Recognizing what your needs are and how they can be met.
3. Communicating what you need (to a teacher, parent, or anyone else), taking steps to assert yourself if you're not taken seriously.

### Modeling Self Advocacy

Kids are perceptive and they internalize what we do. Kids can learn from their parents by modeling the behavior. As you are modeling and advocating for things, explain to them what you are doing and why you are doing it.

In addition to just modeling let them in on the process. It is good to talk with them about how to go about advocating for themselves. Reassure them that it is okay to express what is wrong and where they are having trouble.

### Teaching Self-Advocacy for Social Settings

Self-Advocacy can be taught in social settings too. Peer pressure is something that all kids deal with in today's world. The pressure to fit in is something a majority of students deal with every day. No matter the age of your child, teaching them how to advocate for themselves in social situations now will give them the confidence to deal with things in adulthood.

They will have more confidence to reject mistreatment in toxic workplace and controlling relationships.

Here are ways that you can help your kids self-advocate around peers:

- Role playing: When your child is dealing with a difficult situation you can help them by role playing the situation with them and going over different scenarios with them.
- Practice I messages: Teaching your kid I messages allows them to express how they feel in non-blaming ways. Having them say, "I feel sad when you ignore me" allows them to get their point across without blaming others.

### Learning Self-Advocacy Takes Time

No matter if your child is in elementary or high school self-advocacy takes time to become comfortable with. It is something that as your child gets older they will hopefully become more comfortable with it.

Your child does not need to become famous like some of the advocates throughout history, but having the skill and being comfortable advocating for their rights is something that will help them become successful in their lives.

## Preview to next month

March is  
"You can be whatever  
you want to be"

During the month we will discuss that no matter your gender, race, ethnicity, age or abilities that you can be whatever you want to be. The goal will be to expose our students to different occupations and people that they can relate to in those fields.

## What is being done at Westwood Middle School

The month of January we spent time exploring our Westwood Families and how unique and special they are to our students. The students were able to have discussions about family dynamics and how it's ok to be different. They talked about when they realized people were different than they were and how they felt. It made way for some amazing conversations amongst classmates.

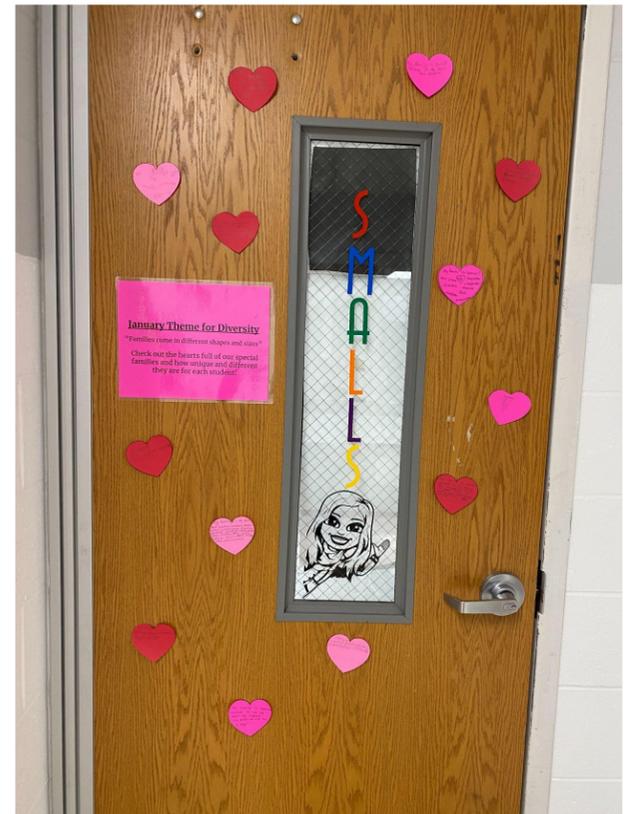
If you walk the halls of the school you will see pink and red hearts with special dedications to those who mean the most to our staff and students. You will also be able to view on our video boards, pictures of our students and their families and friends that mean the most to them. We hope you know how much you mean to your students and thank you for sharing them with us on a daily basis.



We will be participating in RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WEEK FEBRUARY 13th-19th

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

Don't forget to take some time to be kind to someone this week and do something nice just because you can.





PICTURE CAPTION: 7th Grade hallway heart collage.

## Whole school activity

Westwood has spent the last few weeks talking about our families and people that are important to us. Students were able to share pictures of their families or "families" that are important to them that are broadcast throughout the school on the video screens. It does not always have to be a blood relative that is most important to our students and that is nice to see broadcast throughout the schools. Seeing everyone's families and smiling faces on our video boards has been fun to see. Students have also enjoyed seeing their teachers' families on the board.

## Classroom activities

- 6th & 7th grade Science teachers are completing activities exploring African American scientists and inventors as well as those from other ethnical backgrounds.
- 6th grade social studies is working on researching different African Americans each day as their bellringer.
- Art is still working on their "ugly jugs" and will share pictures when they are finished in the kiln.
- Mrs. Smalls' enrichment is doing a daily reading lesson on significant moments in black history in America.
- Mrs. Johnson is working on articles of the week that include the opioid epidemic and also holidays celebrated around the world.
- Mr. Arnott in 8th grade is beginning their song journals where students will articulate their observations of and reactions to different musical acts from the twentieth century. In February we are highlighting the many contributions of black artists to the world's soundscape. Students are listening to legendary figures such as Nina Simone, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Ella Fitzgerald, Paul Robeson, Sam Cooke and George Clinton who laid the foundations for the vast majority of music that followed their lives and performances. Students will be picking an artist to research themselves this month and will be introduced to the riveting lives of Josephine Baker and Paul Robeson in preparation for our unit on the ideas and changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



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March is "You can be whatever you want to be"

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### March Observations

- Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
- Ethnic Equality Month
- Gender Equality Month
- National Women's History Month.
- National Girls and Women in Sports Day

What to expect next month...We will be exploring what we can do to achieve whatever we set our hearts and minds to be.