

Principal's News

DEC. 5, 2022

A MESSAGE FROM DR. THERESA THAO-YANG

NYOB ZOO XYOO TSHIAB (HAPPY NEW YEAR)!

Happy Hmong New Year!



Thank you to the Nokomis North community for coming out and celebrating Hmong New Year with us. You helped make our Hmong New Year celebration a success. It was wonderful seeing students and families dressed up, the performances from our Hmong CLAnD students, Supryze and Jari, the Celestials, and the fun everyone had. I continue to be thankful to be able to be in a space where one's culture and traditions can be celebrated and shared, and look forward to the many other cultures and celebrations we will be celebrating.

As we move into December and get ready for winter break, I hope everyone continues to stay healthy and is able to spend time with family and loved ones.

MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE

Flu Season Is Hitting Minnesota Early This Year

Flu outbreaks are hitting Minnesota schools earlier than usual this year. SPPS Health and Wellness is seeing an increase in illness visits in our health offices and more absences for staff and students. Some people are reporting fevers and flu-like symptoms that are lasting longer than normal. Our health staff has also seen recent cases where entire families become sick with RSV and it later turns into pneumonia and/or COVID-19.

We would like to remind staff and students to take precautions against the many respiratory illnesses out there by encouraging frequent hand washing, staying home when sick and testing for COVID-19 to rule it out, and consulting with your healthcare provider as needed.

SPPS is currently offering flu shots at our weekly COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Please visit spps.org/covidvaccine and use the registration links to sign up for a flu shot, COVID-19 booster, or both.



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

[HomeHelpMN](#) is offered through Minnesota Housing to help if you have fallen behind on your mortgage or other housing-related expenses due to the pandemic. Whether it's providing financial assistance or guiding you to trusted resources, they want you to get the help you need, at the time you need it most.

[Community Action](#) offers a variety of services to help meet the immediate needs of people living in Ramsey and Washington counties. Learn how they can help you pay your heat and water bills, keep your home safe and warm, access Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, get your home weatherized, apply for a car loan, and assist you with filing your taxes.

[Fresh Produce Distribution](#): Stop by for FREE fresh fruits and vegetables all winter long.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES - CIRCLES

Restorative Practices (RP) is a way of how we wish to be in relationship with others in the world. It grounds us in community through understanding and nurturing relationships. Through the use of practices like a Circle and community learning, we honor the whole child.



Circles

Restorative practices are held in a circle so that not one person is seen as the leader or in control. Through participating in circles regularly, students will learn the value of building and maintaining peaceful classroom communities, develop and use language that is reflective of restorative practices and use restorative questioning to help them communicate more effectively. Roffey and MacCarthy (2013) state that circles have a philosophy and a set of principles that should be followed. These are:

- Equality and Democracy - Everyone sits in a circle and has the chance to speak. No one can dominate the circle. The circle includes activities that allows the students to get to know one another and speak to others that they may not know very well.
- Safety - There is no pressure to speak and sometimes the third person is used. Issues can be discussed but not specific incidents. The activities allow for collaboration, not

competition.

- Respect - Everyone listens to the person speaking. Verbal or non-verbal put-downs are not allowed.
- Inclusion and choice - The circle's main aim is student choice to participate, not adult control. If anyone is asked to leave the circle then they can re-join once they are ready to follow the guidelines of the circle. The circle promotes inclusion of all students with adjustments being made where needed.
- Positivity - Circles focus on developing strengths and solutions. They allow the students to work on shared positive goals and promote positive thoughts and actions.
- Agency - Students are given occasions to talk about issues that are important to them rather than being told what to do. This should increase the chance for all students to abide by the decisions they make.
- The facilitator's role is to:
 - o not control the circle
 - o manage and fully participate in what happens in the circle
 - o model the expected behavior
 - o encourage reflection throughout the circle

Circles' origins as a restorative practice

Global indigenous communities have a long-standing history of living in alignment with what we now refer to as restorative practice. The circle process that many non-Native people use today is rooted in the tradition of talking circles that Native Peoples in North America use and have used for millennia. Different Native Peoples practice different forms of the circle process. In these traditions, circles are far more than a technique; they are a way of life. Circles embody a philosophy, principles, and values that apply whether people are sitting in circle or not. (From Living Justice Press.org/About Circles).

A Circle – a process of communication that allows for participants to connect with themselves and others to build understanding and relationships.

Circle Keeper – someone who prompts the circle with questions for learning.

Talking Piece – an object that is used to signal to the circle who is speaking.

Center Piece – the center of the circle that reflect the community and it's values.

Opening & Closing – a way to start & end a community circle (a book, poem, activity, etc.)

Prompt – guiding questions that open conversation for the circle (can be: a check in, story sharing, a reflection)

SAVE THE DATES!

- Dec. 10 - School Choice Fair @ River Center from 9 am - 2 pm
- Dec. 12 - PTO Meeting
- Dec. 19 - Jan. 2, 2023 - Winter Break. NO SCHOOL.



ABOUT US

- Our school is based on the Montessori method: students learn at their own pace in multi-grade classrooms, independently cultivating their interests and natural abilities. Teachers help students choose their work in carefully prepared, peaceful environments; students use beautifully designed hands-on materials to practice and understand skills and concepts. Teachers are Montessori certified and use the Montessori philosophy to guide instruction.

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