



Dear Orchard Mesa Families,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving break filled with quality time with family and friends. Our staff returned recharged, and we've been thrilled to see students back at school ready to learn and finish the term strong. Finishing well and striving for excellence matter in school, at work, and in our personal lives. In this newsletter, I want to highlight some outstanding examples of excellence and connection at Orchard Mesa Middle School (OMMS) this semester

As we wrap up the term, there are many celebrations to share. First, our students and staff have been intentionally building a culture of connection and celebration. Our Panorama survey shows a continued upward trend in student culture. Student Government—led by faculty sponsor Lisa Beltran—has been instrumental in this growth. They organized a school-wide “Battle of the Beads” rock-paper-scissors competition before break, conducted listening tours in Advisories to learn how students think we can strengthen belonging and peer respect, planned our winter dance, and supported local elementary schools with the North Pole Store.

Our staff Connection Committee, led by Assistant Principal Mrs. Carroll, is also doing great work, planning events that foster collegiality and show our staff how valued they are. Some of these include staff affirmations, events outside of the work day, and fun faculty challenges, such as tournaments and trivia. These experiences are strengthening connections and culture throughout our staff.

Our culture is strengthened not only by these efforts but also by celebrations and culminating performances. November and December have been full of them: strong team results at the Lego League robotics competition, Theatre Improv and Dance performances, and winter concerts from our Band, Choir, and Orchestra programs. Most notably, seven students represented OMMS in the Western Slope Select Band, rehearsing throughout the weekend of November 22 and performing in an outstanding regional concert. In addition, several students auditioned for the highly selective Western Slope Honor Jazz Band, with five earning spots and three earning alternate positions. A huge shout-out to Mr. Rabito for his leadership in both music and the Thanksgiving Turkey Basket Giveaway, which was the largest it has ever been.

Our students are also showing academic excellence in class and on assessments. Strong academics open doors to future opportunities, and they begin with effort and a growth mindset. This month, students are taking their mid-year NWEA assessments in Math, Science, and English Language Arts (ELA). Please take time to review your student's effort and results with them. We are seeing the majority of students meeting or exceeding their growth goals, and we aim to continue that positive trajectory.

These semester accomplishments are no accident. They reflect students and staff being proactive and committed to learning. Our school goals focus on ensuring that every student feels a sense of belonging and makes one or more years of academic growth. We've made real progress through strengthening Advisory, reinforcing clear school expectations, and engaging staff in collaborative learning around rigorous instruction. We are also deepening student ownership of learning through our AVID program and a school-wide emphasis on note-taking. I want to celebrate the hard work of both students and staff in these areas. Finishing well and achieving excellence begin with clear goals, but it's the daily effort and persistence that bring those goals to life—and we are seeing the results at OMMS.

Below you'll find a list of key events and information as we finish the last few weeks of the second quarter. As always, please reach out with any questions. Thank you for partnering with us in your child's education.

Go Knights!

Respectfully,

Danny  
Dr. Danny Medved  
Principal, Orchard Mesa Middle School  
Home of the Knights  
Danny.Medved@D51schools.org

# School Counselor Newsletter

## Self-Care During the Holiday Season

The holiday season can be a wonderful time for celebration, connection, and rest — but it can also bring stress, big emotions, and schedule changes that feel overwhelming for middle schoolers and families. This month, let's focus on simple ways to stay grounded, cared for, and connected.

### For Students: Self-Care Tips

#### 1. Take Breaks

Holiday activities are fun, but they can be tiring. Remind yourself it's okay to step away, take a breather, or have some quiet time.

#### 2. Notice Your Feelings

Excitement, stress, sadness, or a mix of all three — emotions are normal! Try journaling, drawing, or talking with a trusted adult about what's on your mind.

#### 3. Keep Routines When You Can

Your sleep schedule, screen time, and healthy habits help keep your body and mood balanced.

#### 4. Focus on What You Can Control

Family plans or holiday events may change. When things feel uncertain, think about what you can do: practice deep breathing, listen to music, or do something you enjoy.

### For Families: Supporting Your Middle Schooler

- **Create calm moments together.**

Short activities — walking, baking, reading, or watching a movie — can help kids feel connected and grounded.

- **Keep communication open.**

Ask simple check-in questions: "How are you feeling about our plans?" or "Is anything stressing you out right now?"

- **Maintain expectations but allow flexibility.**

Holidays can disrupt routines. Clear guidelines with some built-in grace help kids feel safe and supported.

- **Encourage balanced time.**

Kids need a mix of social time, rest, and independence. Help them find that balance without overscheduling.

### A Reminder

Everyone experiences the holidays differently. Some families celebrate, some don't; some enjoy big gatherings, others prefer quiet time. No matter what this season looks like, practicing self-care and kindness — to ourselves and each other — makes a big difference.

If your child needs extra support or you have concerns, please reach out. Your school counseling team is here to help!

# Kids Aid

## The Backpack Program

*Orchard Mesa Middle School proudly partners with the Kids Aid Backpack program for any student who is in need of extra food over the weekend.*

*Kids Aid typically distributes 10-14 items in each bag—two to three dinner items, two to three lunch items, two to three breakfast items and some nutritious snacks. The items are selected and paired so children can easily prepare meals (e.g., canned chicken is paired with refried beans and tortillas to make burritos.)*

*If you would like for your student to receive a food bag on Friday please fill out the google sheet below and we will get them signed up*

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AfsbzJgnUccu026Yq9VDsT8oV2foaXgj5zpFzy5-z9E/edit>

## The **Knights' Knook**

*The Knight's Knook clothing closet is open! All items in the store are free if you need it. Currently, the following items are available:*



Toothbrushes  
Toothpaste  
Deodorant  
Shampoo  
Conditioner  
Body wash/soap  
Backpacks  
Shoes  
Miscellaneous Toiletries  
Shirts  
Pants/shorts  
Coats/jackets  
Hats  
Accessories



*If your students need any of these items please let the main office know and they will get them set up.*

# OMMS PTO

FUNDRAISER



FUNDRAISING



## RAISE SOME DOUGH

Bring in this flyer, or order online through the MOD app or website, to use the fundraiser code provided and MOD will donate 25% of your bill to support your school!



**JOIN MOD IN SUPPORTING**

**ORGANIZATION NAME:** ORCHARD MESA MIDDLE SCHOOL

**FUNDRAISER DATE:** DECEMBER 11, 2025

**ADDRESS:** 1201 WELLINGTON AVE. SUITE 101  
GRAND JUNCTION, CO 81501

**FUNDRAISER CODE:** MODGIVES25



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[www.getairsilo.com](http://www.getairsilo.com)

Orchard Mesa

Middle

Friday, Dec. 12

10a - 11pm

\$15 FOR 90 MINUTES

You are welcome  
to jump any time  
between 10am and 11pm,  
but we encourage you  
to come between  
5pm and 8pm  
so the OMMS community  
can all jump together



Make sure  
to say  
"I'm here  
to support  
OMMS!"

\$4 of your admission will be  
donated to OMMS

## BRING ON THE BOUNCE





# Apply to The Challenge Program

at Orchard Mesa Middle School

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A  
UNIQUE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
EXPERIENCE?

WE ARE INTERESTED IN  
SEEING YOUR APPLICATION!

Come join a middle school program as  
exceptional as you.



Work with other students that LOVE learning



Build leadership skills



Discover friendships



Experience learning outdoors



Embrace challenges



Accelerate your learning to earn high school credit



contact us

The Challenge Program  
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Grand Junction, CO 81503

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