THE COMMUNITY CHRONICLE

Dear Parents,
This newsletter will update you about community building activities that have been happening in your child's classroom. It will give a brief overview, share tips and offer resources on various mental health and social emotional issues.

~Wu Chen, School Psychologist

Classroom Community

Assertiveness

For the past few months, students have learned what does it mean to be assertive and the difference between being assertive, aggressive, and passive. They have learned the importance of sticking up for themselves and asking for what they need or deserve in a confident, and respectful way. It may not be easy to be assertive. Many students are not demonstrating the ability to self-advocate or they can communicate in ways that make others anxious. We have been learning strategies to help them to be assertive.

* Use an **"I" sentence** that is strong and direct to tell others what you think, what you want, and how you feel when others are not treating you fairly.

* Use the **No Thanks** tool to say no to bad situations and to people who pressure you. We have discussed ways that can make saying no easier (have self-respect, be honest about how nervous you are as you are saying no, and get a friend to back you up).

* Use **Asking Questions** when you need information or help. Most of the time, other people are glad you asked the question that they were afraid to ask themselves.

* Use the **Squeaky Wheel** when the person you are talking to does not listen. Keep repeating what you want in a firm, and determined way. However, don't be persistent if you think the person might hurt you.

Self-Control

My goal is to also help students understand the importance of self-control. Research has shown strong correlation between one's ability to pursue goals and later success in life. We have been discussing making good choices in the face of temptation and remaining calm even when criticized or provoked. Although exercising self-control can be very difficult at times, the good news is that our ability to self-control is fluid and anyone can improve skills by using strategies.

The following strategies can be helpful for improving self-control:

- * Create If-Then Plans. **If** I practice my piano regularly, **then** I can play songs by myself.
- * Put **distance** between you and your behavior (temptation). Focus on the **future** or the long term consequences of your behavior, instead of instant gratification.

- * Recognize anger warning signs before erupting with anger, take a break, think **COOL thoughts,** release anger safely, and work the problem out or just move on. We will be discussing more about solving problems and resolving conflicts this month.
- * Reflect on times you used self-control to accomplish hard tasks or to control your tempers. This can help you discover strategies that work for you.
- * **Try this evidenced-based tool for self-control: WOOP** Goal Setting developed by Dr. Gabriele and Dr. Peter Gollwitzer. Research has shown that it is not enough just to think positively, but we also need to incorporate a clear sense of reality in order to benefit from positive thinking. **WOOP** stands for Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan.
- **W**ish—Select a challenging but achievable goal that is dear to you.
- **O**utcome — Visualize the best result or feeling from accomplishing your wish.
- **O**bstacle— Identify an obstacle within you that prevents you from accomplishing your wish.
- **P**lan— Develop an effective action plan that directly links to overcoming the obstacle.
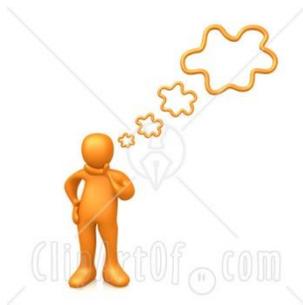
Resources:
These books may be helpful in understanding concepts studied in class.
Speak Up and Get Along! by Scott Cooper
The Marshmallow Test by Walter Mischel

Rethinking Positive Thinking by Gabriele Oettingen
What to Do When Your Temper Flares by Dawn Huber

'In-sties'
Here are some websites that are a great resource. Take a peek!

Web Sites:

- Character Lab: characterlab.org
- WOOP: woopmylife.org