The Ridgeview Reporter

December 2017 / January 2018

560 W. Spartan Drive, Sparta, MI 49345
Phone 887-8218 ~ Fax 887-1928 ~ Attendance 887-2090
Marialyce Zeerip, Principal ~ marialyce.zeerip@spartaschools.org

Monthly Value: Integrity- December
Quality- January

Quick Facts

Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
8:20-3:55

Student Drop Off:
8:20-8:35AM

Breakfast/Recess:
8:20-8:35AM

Bell Rings:
8:40AM

Dear Ridgeview Family,

Welcome to December and the holiday season. Truly, these last 3 months have just flown by! From the first day of school – with students excited but disoriented with the changes in the building, to now – where students have routines mastered and are engaged deeply in learning…the time seems oddly condensed.

And we are just a few weeks from Christmas – a time of wonder and possibility for our students. We love the holiday season and celebrate here with a Christmas assembly with carols, a reading of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" and a visit by Mr. and Mrs. Claus. We also enjoy many stories about elves and gingerbread men, toys and reindeer! It's just a wonderful time of year!

As you consider how your children might spend their time during the holidays, we invite you to have them get outside!
Evidence shows that being regularly immersed in a natural setting like a park or woodland reduces anxiety and stress. For children, studies show that *unstructured* time outdoors can increase curiosity, creativity and problem solving ability. It also improves their physical fitness and coordination and may reduce symptoms associated with ADD.

Knowing the benefits and the sheer pleasure that being in Nature brings, we encourage you to get your kids unplugged and outdoors this winter break, enjoying the wonder that is Michigan.

Happy Holidays to you and your family,
Marialyce Zeerip, Principal

DECEMBER / JANUARY CALENDAR

December 11:	Board of Education Meeting - Admin Building @ 6:30pm
December 19:	Holiday Parties - 1st grade party 10:15 - 11:15am / kinder and 2nd grade 2:15 - 3:15pm
December 21- Jan. 2:	Holiday Break – *Happy Holidays!*
January 3:	School Resumes
January 8:	Board of Ed Meeting 6:30pm @ Administration Building
January 18:	*Teacher In-Service day –1/2 Day for Students. Parent Pickup at 11:35am / Bus at 11:50am*
January 19:	*Teacher In-Service day –1/2 Day for Students. Parent Pickup at 11:35am / Bus at 11:50am*
January 25:	2nd grade Music program ~ High School auditorium

***Please read classroom newsletters for specific events to that class – Thank you!**

- **PowerSchool:**
  Parents: please remember to UPDATE your *contact, medical and other information* in PowerSchool whenever changes are made. We cannot be of assistance when we do not have accurate information. Thanks.

- **Childcare:** If your child is in need of **before or after school care**, please contact Robyn Tryon @ 887-1449 for more information.

- **Help at the Bus Stops:**
  If you are able to, please supervise bus stops for the safety of all students, especially during the winter months. We ask your help in reminding your children that snowballs and ice are not to be thrown at bus stops or at school; encourage snow building!

- **Ridgeview needs *substitute* lunch/recess TAs**!
  Ridgeview is looking for folks to work from 11a.m. - 1p.m., supporting our students in the cafe and outside, at lunch recess. If interested, let the office know then go online, at **EduStaff.org,** and apply.

SAVE THE DATE!

spartaschools.org/sef since 1997
Sparta Education Foundation
Providing Extras for Education

Sparta Education Foundation (SEF) upcoming events:

FOOD for THOUGHT - Tuesday January 16, 2018,
from 5 p.m. to close at Downtown Trini's & Margarita Joe's.
Watch your Friday folder in January for a flyer that you must present to your server.
Trini's will generously donate 10% of all food sales to the SEF.
Let Trini's do the cooking and support SEF at the same time!
Flyers may be used for take-out orders as well.

Be sure to Mark your calendar and watch for other upcoming SEF events:

- Pasta Night Fun-draiser at the Garden Patch Monday, February 5, 2018, from 4 to 8 p.m.
- RetroBowl at Sparta Lanes Saturday, March 3, 2018, at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Thank you for your support! The Sparta Education Foundation's mission is to help provide creative, progressive and innovative educational opportunities for Sparta Area Schools students K through 12th grade, which are beyond the normal operating budget of the school district.

Nurse Amy Roelse - District Nurse - 887-7506 ext.3311
http://spartaschools.org/other/nurseinformation/

As the temperatures drop and the winds pick up, it is time to bundle up our kids again. Please help your children dress appropriately for the weather each day. Please keep in mind they may be outside for extended periods of time – bus stop and recess – and exposed skin is in danger of frostbite.
Please let us know if you are in need of winter wear.

In addition, just a reminder that all students are expected to go outside for recess (weather permitting) unless a student has an existing medical condition or a note from a physician indicating that recess would be hazardous to a student's health.

PE NEWS!!- Mrs. Berwald - 887-8218 ext. 3404

Physical Education is a necessary component of a child's overall education. Through physical education, students learn important life skills that positively impact their childhood. And, physical activity can create a positive balance between the body and the mind, thus improving the child as a whole.

During PE time, I try to create a fun and enjoyable environment where the students can feel comfortable and relaxed. Games and skill practice are modified to meet the needs of the students. Individual, as well as, group games are geared towards improving each student's self-image, so that they may grow in confidence.

Please…I am requesting that the students wear clothes and **footwear** that are appropriate for physical activity according to the schedule. *Tennis shoes* are important in order to maintain the safest environment possible in the gym. Please know what day your child has PE, and send him//her to school with tennis shoes. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Mrs. Berwald (wendi.berwald@spartaschools.org)

ART NEWS!!- Mrs. Mitchell – 887-8218 ext. 3318

smART Newsletter

Basic Info:

- Art to Remember orders will be coming in before Winter Break.
- 25 of our artists' work has been chosen to be displayed at the KISD through the month of November and December!

Art Projects:

DK/T1: Asian Dragons; our artists are taking a look at dragons from Asian cultures and designing their own

1st Grade: African Neckpieces and Necklaces; our artists are working on designing a neckpiece by studying the patterns and artwork from African cultures. Next, we will be designing our own beads and making a beautiful necklace to go along with it.

2nd Grade: Healing Plants; our artists are working on creating their own "healing plant" after taking a look at how Native Americans used plants as medicine.

The art room is in need of…

- Old adult T-shits
- Stickers
- Sticks (one foot long, ¼ to ½ inch wide)
- Full boxes of Kleenex
- Hand Sanitizer

MUSIC NEWS- Mrs. Ruffer- 887-8218 ext. 3101

The music room has been filled with dynamics and rhythm this month. *Dynamics* is the musical term for volume.
Second and First graders have been learning and using the proper terms (Forte, Mezzoforte, Piano) while **Kindergarten** students have been discovering when and why we might use different volumes. Students have also been learning how to identify the difference between the steady beat (like the heart beat, it stays steady) and the rhythm (the part that moves with your words). As we move into December, the students will be learning to read musical notations.

CONCERT INFO: *Second Grade* information will be coming soon! Our concert is January 25, at the HIGH SCHOOL!

Sparta PTC
"Making a Positive Difference"

General PTC Meetings (held at the RV Media Center)

Monday, May 7, 2017 ~ 6:15 - 7:00p.m.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the 2017 Spartan Spirit Walk was a success raising **over $26,000** for the elementary schools of Sparta to provide field trips, books, much needed supplies, assemblies, class parties and much more! Thank you to all of our donors, volunteers, parents, teachers, and students for their participation! Thank you to the following businesses and organizations for their sponsorships:

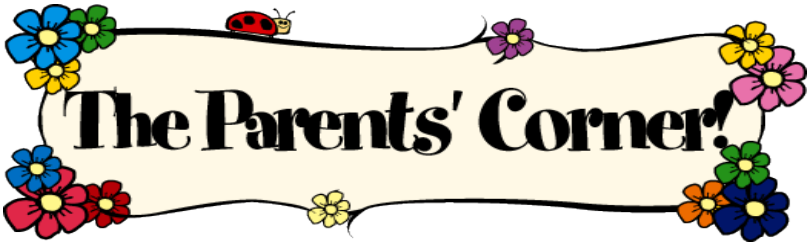
Armock Mechanical
Bradford Dairy Farms
Culvers
DHE
E&K Telecom
Elite Apples
Flor-Dri Supply Company
Grand Rapids Popcorn Company
Hessel-Cheslek Funeral Home
Jukebox Hero
Knowlton & Masson Denistry
Old Orchard
RLR Construction
Sparta Chevrolet
Sparta High School National Honor Society
Sparta Tire & Automotive
Water Works
Williams Orthodontics

The PTC exists to enhance the educational experiences of our children and to offer parents and teachers the opportunity to come together in our community. **We invite you to be a part of the PTC.** Volunteers are as welcome as they are necessary, working together, we can make a positive difference! Visit our Facebook Page at **Facebook.com/SpartaPTC** and let us know if you are interested in helping with in the following areas: Box Tops, Book Fairs, Class Parties, Mobile Dentist, Picture Day, Art, Junior Achievement & More!

The following positions will be **OPEN** for the 2018-2019 School Year:
• President
• Vice President-Special Events
• Vice President- Fundraising
• Secretary
• Grade Rep/Room Parent Chair for Appleview

If you are interested in any of these open positions, please contact the PTC at ptc@spartaschools.org or Voicemail Box: 887-7500 ext. 3506.

The difference between a good school and a GREAT school is directly related to the level of positive involvement of parents and community!



How to Teach Your Kids to Value Personal Accountability

by Barbara Leech.
(This article is part of the Building Character series @ afineparent.com

Ask Yourself Some Tough Questions

Say your son is arguing about cleaning up toys scattered all over the living room floor. He is tired. His face is red, eyes are welling up with the promise of fresh tears and there are signs that an emotional meltdown is imminent if you pursue. Do you hold your parental ground until the task is done?

If you are like me, the answer is a defensive, “sometimes”.

I am human. I am also a mom of four and I have my breaking points where I just surrender. By the end of the day, I feel like my mission is to simply keep everyone happy and injury-free until I can tuck them into bed. I don’t want another loud, weepy cleanup session that lasts for 45 minutes because they are moving at the speed of a slug caught in slow motion replay.

I don’t know who suffers more – they stuck with the task of cleaning up or me, charged with the task of enforcing the cleanup rule.

I hear myself say “*That’s great, let’s keep going! We are almost done! Don’t forget that pile over there.*”

They sometimes look at me with a bit of contempt, sputtering about how I am not being fair, how tired they are and how long it is taking to get their task complete.

They start pointing fingers at each other. One of them declares he never played with the Legos, so he certainly won’t be cleaning that up. The other, not wanting to let him get away easy, charges in with “*you did too*”.

Slowly my resolve to enforce the cleanup rule is becoming weaker. Holding yourself, and those around you, accountable is not easy for any of us. Sometimes, I fail at it.

I have a burning desire for some peace and quiet. I don’t want to arbiter who used which toy and is responsible for cleaning which part of the mess. I stop caring.

I take the easy way out because avoiding one more emotional confrontation is worth anything, including picking up the mess myself.

Small as the issue may seem, I’ve let my kids get away from taking personal accountability for their role in cleaning up the mess they’ve made. Worse still, because we have a cleanup rule in the house, but letting them off the hook, I am sending them the message that they can get away with breaking the rules.

I think to myself “just this once”.

But that’s not the case is it?

Teaching Personal Accountability is an All-or-Nothing Lesson

Why? Because every time you waver,

- **You send mix signals, but expect good results.** Children respond to routines and expectations. This is how their behavior is shaped and modeled. If they do not see accountability as something that is expected 100 percent of the time, there is no consistent guideline for their actions.
- **You empower your children in the wrong way.** When I give in to my kids' arguments and do not hold them accountable for their actions, my kids are taught that there are loopholes in accountability. They begin to assume they can argue or negotiate their way out of personal responsibility (like the Tyco CEO). I have seen that every time I surrender (telling myself, just this once) and not hold them responsible as I should, their resolve to argue about it the next time becomes stronger. They become little lawyers, defending and arguing about guilt and responsibility because they know the judge (mom) can be lenient.
- **You demonstrate that you as a parent are not holding yourself accountable.**Children watch what you do and how *you* handle your own responsibilities. Studies show that your kids model their behavior by watching you. If you don't uphold the rules because it is easier not to, that is what they learn from the experience.

None of This is Easy, At Least Not at First

If your children are like mine, they possess the skills to make this lesson as difficult as possible. Mine can argue their case like a gifted attorney and are armed with about one million Legos to unload all over the living room floor each night just to challenge it.

Who dumped the Legos? Was it a group effort or did one child do most of the damage? Is someone being roped into the cleanup who did not actually play with any of the said Lego-mess on the floor? Suddenly I am half parent, half detective.

The trick is to get your kids to the point where they recognize what they are each personally accountable for, so you can turn in your detective badge.

They need to know that this responsibility goes for any task; taking out the garbage, putting their dishes in the dishwasher, cleaning their room before they get to do any special activity and even owning up to when they make a mistake or a poor choice in behavior.

Lead by Example

My job is to teach them ways to develop in character, and I develop as a parent the more I hold myself accountable for what they know, and do not know, about being a responsible human being.

I believe that there are many ways that a parent can still cut themselves a break, like ordering take out for dinner, extending bedtime on special occasions or holding those exhausting birthday parties at the local playground rather than bringing 15 children into your home. But cutting corners on important lessons regarding your child's character is not the way to provide yourself that much needed break. In other words, don't surrender because it is easier!

*You are accountable for your children learning accountability**.***

Explain What Accountability Means in Terms They Understand

So, where do we start? Breaking down the concept of accountability in a way that kids can understand it is a good place, in my opinion.

When my son was bullied on the school bus it was both upsetting and confusing to him. The other boy had been picking on him and one day decided to knock my son on the head with a large toy truck. Later, the child denied the incident and even said he did not own a toy truck. Even after the truck was discovered in the boy's backpack, he continued to deny the incident.

I used this moment with my kids for a discussion about accountability and how it feels when someone does something to you and does not own up to it. Discussing those feelings drove the message home for my kids. I think it taught them a little about empathy for others feelings when they make bad choices and someone else suffers because of it. Realizing their behavior can cause discomfort to others is a great way to prompt your child to be accountable for their actions in the future.

Great, Now How Do I Teach Them to Actually be Accountable?

At empoweringparent.com, counselor Megan Devine, suggests parents create a culture of personal accountability within their home, which means that everyone in the family is responsible for their own behavior and actions.

This means everyone must follow house rules and expectations and will be held accountable for how they behave during arguments. The idea is that by setting a culture of accountability, kids avoid that negative pattern of justifying their behavior with excuses and learn instead to take responsibility.

Here's the breakdown of what we need to do:

- **Set consequences:** If your child doesn't live up to their responsibilities or follow the rules there has to be consequences. As a parent, you must set these beforehand so your child knows about them. You also must stick to them when they do not follow the rules.
- **Make rules/consequences very clear**: Children are great at maneuvering out of responsibility. Close the loopholes. For example, if there is no pushing or shoving allowed between siblings, then that is the rule, no matter what the reason or who started the altercation. If pushing occurs, then that child has to deal with whatever consequence was previously agreed upon. Period.
- **Discuss what they *can* do:** Don't just say that they are not allowed to push their sibling when they are angered, but suggest actions they are allowed so they can deal with those feelings. Kids often don't know what the right response actually is, so give examples of what they *can* do, like talk to mom or dad, remove themselves from the situation, drawing a picture of how they feel, or let out their feelings by kicking a ball around the yard or riding their bike.
- **Remind or cue your child:** If you see your child about to dump out the toy box remind them that they will have to pick everything back up when they are done. Cue them about the expectation and what actions they will have to take to be accountable for their actions.
- **Be consistent**: Accountability cannot be a "sometime" rule and be respected. Set the expectations and stick to the consequences you set. Don't spout out a consequence you will not enforce. I used to be very guilty of that one. It sounded great to say, "No playing outside after dinner," until it was actually after dinner and I really wanted them to play outside.

Like all parents, I dream that my kids will grow up to be happy, raising families of their own and successful in whatever they choose to pursue. And whether it is personal well-being, the joy of family or success in a career – I know they won't get too far without taking personal accountability for their actions. It is a difficult lesson to teach. But, when I consider the implications of not teaching it, I'm willing to put my weariness aside and dig in my heels.
Mission accountability, here I come.

"Sparta Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Joel Stoner, Executive Director of Student and Academic Services
465 S. Union St. Sparta, MI
616-887-8253