

December 8, 2019

Dear Rheem Team Families,

In these final two weeks before Winter Break, all classrooms are participating in our special "Rheem Cares" project. Hopefully, you've already heard details about Kindergarten through 3rd graders providing holiday cheer to the children and mothers at the Women's Drop-In Center in Berkeley, 4th and 5th graders have raised money in the past to support victims of natural disasters as well as sponsoring those less fortunate through Heifer International and clean water initiatives. All families are encouraged to get involved as a way of helping our students practice the important Life skills of Caring and Giving.

This Week at Rheem:

Monday, December 9th:

- Regularly scheduled Monday

Tuesday, December 10th:

- School Site Council Meeting (3:15-4:30 in Room 20A)
- School Board Meeting (700-10:00 in the JM Library)

Wednesday, December 11th:

- Rheem "PBIS" Store open

Thursday, December 12th:

- SUBS (Speak Up Be Safe) 5th Grade

Friday, December 13th:

- 4th/5th Grade Winter Concert from 2:00-3:00 in the Frank

MSD Elementary School Climate Survey

To date, eighty-one families have participated in this year's [Climate Survey](#). (it should take you less than 5 minutes) Your vital feedback gives teachers, staff, administrators and the district important information about your student's current school experience. Survey information is used to monitor progress and develop future areas to improve upon via school plans and the District's [Local Control Accountability Plan](#).

The Climate Survey closes on December 20th, and my hope is that as many Rheem families participate as possible. Thank you to all who have taken the survey and please consider taking a few minutes to include your vital feedback.

Survey link: [MSD Elementary School Climate Survey](#)

School News and Highlights

5th Grade SUBS: 5th graders participated in Speak Up Be Safe and were able to learn more about ways to protect themselves and stay safe, as well as how to identify bullying and what they can do to stop it in its tracks.

4th Grade Field Trip: 4th grade traveled to Fremont last Thursday to visit one of California's original Spanish settlements – Mission San Jose. The Mission System is something they study in social studies this year and there is no better way to learn about history than to experience part of it yourself.

2nd Grade Field Trip: Last Wednesday 2nd grade students took a field trip to ARF (the Animal Rescue Foundation). They were treated to interactive activities with man's best friend, and were enlightened with the foundation's mission. ARF's mission is to rescue as many unwanted animals as possible and find homes for them.

5th/4th grade Winter Concert Friday: Be sure to mark your calendars and make your way to the Frank this Thursday at 2:00 for a concert worth the price of admission. There will be horns, strings and voices filling the Frank with music to our ears. See you there.

Did you Know?

Translation services are made available by the district for any family who requires them. In the event you feel the need to meet with a teacher or staff member and require a translator in your native language, please reach out to Mrs. Fitzinger (lfintzinger@moraga.k12.ca.us) or myself (bsullivan@moraga.k12.ca.us) and we will be sure to schedule one accordingly.

National Geographic Bee Finalists Announced

We are very proud of all 4th and 5th graders who participated in the Preliminary Round of this year's National Geographic Bee. This year, all students took a rigorous 35-question quiz during their scheduled library time to determine who would compete in the final school competition. The eleven qualifying students are listed below:

4th grade finalists

Matthew M.

Adelaide C.

Riley O.

5th grade finalists

Anton K.

Tiago G.

Siegfried N.

Michelle R.

Samuel H.

Andrew K.

Adam S.

Zayden B.

The Final National Geographic Bee Competition will be held on **Monday, January 13 at 9:00 in the Frank**. This contest will be similar to a Spelling Bee where contestants orally answer questions about geography until one champion is selected to represent the school! We are looking forward to this exciting annual event!

The Last Word...

I read an article recently discussing the importance of children taking breaks ([Research-Tested Benefits of Breaks](#)). It talks about the importance of children taking short “brain breaks” throughout the day, and how such breaks increase their productivity and provide them with opportunities to develop creativity and social skills. It goes on to mention that when the brain is idle, it is actually hard at work processing memories and helping us make sense of what we experience. Breaks keep our brains healthy and play a key role in developing cognitive abilities such as reading comprehension and divergent thinking (the ability to generate and make sense of novel ideas).

Some other important ways to give our brain a break and build capacity are through exercise and play. By engaging in physical activity there is an increase in blood flow and oxygenation in the brain, boosting neural connectivity and stimulating nerve growth. The article goes on to say that exercise actually changes the structure of our brains and improves attention and memory, increased brain activity and cognitive function, enhancing our mood and ability to cope with stress.

I know here at Rheem teachers and staff regularly build breaks into the school day with recess, P.E., and classroom movement breaks such as: [GoNoodle](#), transitions between lessons, [BrainPOP](#), and more. The days of students sitting and listening to 30-minute lectures is a thing of the past.

With busy schedules the growing norm for our children these days, how can we build these same breaks into our student’s life outside of school? Turning off screens and getting outside for a family walk or bike ride, or even a trip to the park are a few great ways to start. If you have a moment, I recommend you take a read for yourself on ways to improve your student’s cognitive abilities and overall health.

There’s no place like Rheem!

Mr. Sullivan