

“If you have to say, ‘I was just kidding,’ you probably shouldn’t have done it or said it in the first place.”

Anonymous

Grey Matters

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On Friday, my daughter and I attended the high school’s presentation of The Laramie Project. The performance of our AB students left me in awe. Instead of being intimidated by the publicity, these young men and women gained inspiration and gave us all an experience we should all be proud of. Congratulations to director Linda Potter, the cast and crew, and the communities of Acton and Boxborough for doing the right thing!

November 9th marked the end of the first marking term at RJ Grey and students are scheduled to receive their report cards the week of November 19th. While our teachers have done a wonderful job providing students and families with feedback since the start of the year, this will be the first “official” document of the year.

For some, report cards will reflect the ease with which students have made the transition to the junior high. These students have made the adjustments necessary to succeed at the junior high level and are performing as expected. To these students I say “Congratulations!” This is a great way to start the year but essential to keep up the high caliber of work.

For others, the information provided in the report cards may indicate that a transition is still in process and that there is room for personal growth. This is not inherently a bad thing or reason to be discouraged. The report card is only one tool for assessing progress and performance and ultimately can be a great compass for carving a path for improvement. Now is a great time for students to reach out to their teachers and counselors to build in the supports necessary to ensure a successful year.

Using the results of the Emerson Youth Risk Behavior Survey and through discussions among parents, community, and school staff, the RJG Project Wellness Day was created six years ago for 7th grade students.

Project Wellness is a day-long conference focused on various topics pertaining to the many challenging issues adolescents and their families face in today’s world. The purpose of this important program is to promote communication and trust between our students and adults, focus on a health lifestyle for our families, and support the positive self-esteem of students. This year, our 7th Project Wellness Day will be held on March 26th at Merrimack College in North Andover, MA.

With statistics compiled every other year, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) provides valuable information regarding the behavior and feelings of our young adults. At the middle school level, previous survey results highlighted that some students have struggled with eating issues, lack of sleep, stress, use of alcohol, as well as issues related to bullying and teasing. While it is difficult to know everything about the challenges that our students face, Project Wellness provides information and skills that facilitate positive communication and empower families with knowledge. Workshops offer an opportunity to learn new information, to share ideas with other families, and to spend a day focusing on our children.

It is clear that as much as the school can help educate our students about good decision making, nothing is more influential than the relationship between children and their parents or guardians. The transition from 6th to 7th grade is a major one. Statistics and common sense has shown us that as much as middle school aged youngsters need to start developing their independence, they still need help keeping the lines of communication open with their parents or guardians. Research further shows that strong relationships with adults significantly reduce an adolescent's risk for becoming involved in risky behaviors. The hope is that Project Wellness will help develop or improve family communication around some tough issues that affect our students.

In the past, workshops have addressed important topics such as Internet Safety, Anger Management, Strengthening Family Communication, Body Confidence, Healthy Meals for Busy Families, and much more. Feedback from parents and students has been extremely positive. Seventh grade parents/guardians, please remember to reserve March 26th. You won't want to miss it!

This Tuesday night, from 6PM to 7PM, is my next drop-in hour. If you have any questions or comments about our school or simply want to discuss why the remake of the Bionic Woman just doesn't hold up to the original feel free to swing by.

Finally, the next 8th grade dance is scheduled for this Friday, November 16, from 6:30 – 8:30PM. Tickets will be on sale all week in homeroom for \$4 and will not be sold at the door. Given the enthusiasm this group of students has shown for social gatherings since they came to RJG last year, I anticipate a strong turn out. Parents and guardians, if you intend to pick up your child early, please send in a note and remind your child to check out with a staff member before leaving the dance. I also ask that students be picked up promptly at 8:30. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Have a good week.