November Message

The harvest is nearly complete and the fields are being prepared for winter and the next growing season. Soon, winter will be with us as will the holiday season. During these next several months, we will use words like joy, giving, thankfulness and service. Like the Dickens’ character Ebenezer Scrooge, it is my hope that the spirit of the holiday season can remain in our hearts all the year through. That is my wish for our community, that we seek to find joy in life; that we recognize how fortunate we are and give to those in need; that we are grateful for our freedom, our country, our families, our teachers, our first responders and military families, and our leaders. Finally, I hope that we seek to find ways to serve.

Mount Markham is grateful to recognize the service of our military veterans. Our community veterans play a significant role in our community. We honor them during a special program at our elementary school each year. Doing so, allows our youngest students to be taught about the importance of service and to understand the sacrifices that have been made to provide freedom. Our veterans and first responders are also honored at the 9/11 program organized by our local VFW and American Legion and hosted each fall on campus. We honor our fallen veterans in school programs in May. It is important for us to remember and honor the service that our veterans have provided. Their service and sacrifice has created the opportunity for each member of our community to joy and meaningful life. Thank you to our veterans! Thank you to your families!

Something happens on school campuses that I am not proud of. We have a tendency as educators to talk about how unprepared our students are for their current classes. Sometimes, we lament the apparent skill deficits of our students and in doing so, levy a criticism to previous educators who have, without question, worked hard to support each student’s growth. The pattern continues until there is no previous classroom teacher to levy criticism upon; then we, as parents, become the focus as our children’s first, most important, and forever teachers. I know, as a parent, that my wife and I did our best to prepare our children for success in school, but I remember how I felt when we received a call from my daughter’s kindergarten teacher. “Your daughter is struggling with reading,” we were told. Have you seen the commercial that shows the new parents and how careful they are with their first born, a bit less careful with their second…Well, I suppose our third child did not receive the same amount of early literacy exposure as my first two! Since both parents were educators, we were mortified, but eager to meet with the teacher to learn exactly what challenges our daughter was experiencing and how we could help. We partnered with the teacher and within the school year, we were able to get our daughter back on track.

Next week, our parents and guardians have their opportunity to partner with our classroom teachers. Parent conferences will be occurring all week and in particular on November 15-16. Many conferences will occur during the evening hours of November 15. Students will not be in session on November 16 so that conferences can be completed. I have encouraged our staff to make our parents feel as comfortable as possible and to make every effort to establish a learning partnership that supports our students. I am grateful to each parent that is able to attend conference. Parents, you are your child’s first and most important teacher; please share with our staff and please work with us to support your child’s success.

On behalf of the Mount Markham Central School Board of Education, faculty and staff, we are thankful for your support and wish you and your family a wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday season.