

News Release

Building Bridges: Celebrating Differences Teaches Springhurst Elementary Students to Accept People with Different Abilities and Challenges

Informational Parents Meeting on Tuesday, October 29th

Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. October 25, 2013-- Springhurst family members are invited to attend a **parent information meeting on Tuesday, October 29th at 7 p.m.** at the elementary school to outline the school-wide **Building Bridges: Celebrating Differences** program scheduled for the week of November 12-22, 2013. Last year's pilot program was extremely successful and this initiative has been expanded to include grades 3-5 as part of the District's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA).

Both students and staff will be involved in the Building Bridges: Celebrating Differences program, which is co-sponsored by the Dobbs Ferry PTSA and the School District. The goals of this program are to increase students' knowledge and understanding of people with different abilities, develop empathy for the challenges these individuals may face and promote a school community that is inclusive, accepting and respectful of all people.

According to Erin Vredenburgh, Director of Special Education for the Dobbs Ferry School District, through experiential hands-on activities and guest speakers, students will be exposed to the tools and strategies these individuals use every day to overcome their challenges. A different type of disability will be highlighted at each grade level. Ms. Vredenburgh will be speaking at the parent forum and showing parents samples of what the simulations will look like for the various grades including:

- Kindergarten- physical disabilities (Spring 2014)
- First Grade- blindness/vision impairments
- Second Grade- deafness/hearing loss
- Third Grade- autism
- Fourth Grade- learning disabilities
- Fifth Grade- accessibility/civic mindedness

"Although we are coming together as a school community around this important topic for one week during the school year, we remain consistent in our ongoing commitment to build an inclusive community that supports ALL learners and fosters each student's academic and emotional growth," said Dobbs Ferry Superintendent Dr. Lisa Brady. "The **Building Bridges - Celebrating Differences** program is a wonderful opportunity for our students and school community and I want to encourage parents to attend this informational meeting."

For more information, please contact:

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