



**NAUSET
YOUTH
ALLIANCE**

Positively Guiding Today's Youth
Into Tomorrow's World

NEWSLETTER

May 2023

Kindness Matters

At NYA we have three overarching expectations. They are:

1. Listen to the teacher the first time.
2. Keep our hands and bodies to ourselves.
3. Be kind.

Like so many skills we teach our children, compassion and kindness take practice. Through their committed practice, they also can bring our children great rewards, such as increased confidence, improved collaboration and social networking skills, and a greater sense of community.

Prosocial behaviors are grounded in human nature. Even toddlers show an inclination to care about helping others in need. Yet as children age, their focus can be drawn toward competition and individualism. Teaching children the value of civic engagement and volunteerism often starts at home. Parents can help children as young as three years old learn the behaviors and attitudes associated with community service – the ideas of caring and sharing. These do not need to be complex interactions: activities like donating food or outgrown clothing increase the ability of children under ten to understand the experiences and needs of others.

Research shows that teaching and modeling the social competencies of kindness and compassion produces significant benefits for children and youth, including:

- **Increased levels of happiness, caring and emotional well-being.** Acts of kindness help children form connections that are positively associated with increased happiness.
- **A greater sense of belonging and improved self-esteem.** The rush of endorphins related to helping others creates a sense of lasting pride, optimism, and self-worth.
- **Improved health and less stress.** Service among teens is linked to lower rates of drug use and pregnancy. Altruism often releases oxytocin, a hormone that reduces stress levels.

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Important Dates

NYA Annual Meeting

Tue, May 16th

Please mark your calendar for the Annual Meeting at Stony Brook School on Tue, May 16th from 5:30-6:30 pm. A pizza dinner with dessert will be provided. Bring the whole family and let someone else cook and clean for the night.

Early Release

Wed. May 17th

NYA begins at 11 AM following early dismissal. If your child is attending NYA on an early release day, please be sure to send a lunch or request the bag lunch offered by the schools prior to dismissal time.

School Closed

Monday, May 29th

Memorial Day

- **Increased feelings of gratitude.** Helping others provides perspective, prompting young people to appreciate the bright spots of their own circumstances.
- **Better concentration.** Kindness is connected with increased positivity and serotonin levels. This combination often results in better sleep, memory, learning, attention spans, and willingness to learn.

Overall, children and youth involved in community service grow into adults that typically have a stronger work ethic, continue to volunteer, and have higher voting rates.

Whether an educator, parent, or family member, we all serve as crucial role models for kids on the topic of giving back. We all can embody the spirit of kindness by teaching our children to take care of our neighbors, our communities, and our country.



Stony Brook School

We marched into March talking about the weather, St Patrick's Day and the start of spring. We played charades to describe different weather, and painted rainbows into pots of gold. The students made play dough gardens and created beautiful flowers on graham crackers using different fruits.

In April we talked about Ladybugs and insects. Which ones are good for your garden? We made "peep houses" for our chicks and spring cards to share with family and friends. Wild animals and their habitats was a fun and interesting topic as well. Do you know what a group of giraffes are called? A tower. How about a bunch of monkeys? A barrel

We finished the month of April talking about transportation and things that go. Our students played Pictionary in teams and painted beautiful picture stories about the vehicle they chose. The kid's work was thoughtful and creative.

Eddy School

At Eddy, NYA students have been developing their own town - aptly named NYA Town. Students constructed simple business plans to guide their ideas. They produced products ranging from lemonade to fishing lures to hand written books. On Thursdays and Fridays students "sell" their goods to classmates. A different student each week volunteers as the Health inspector, keeping business owners accountable to keep their area clean and tidy up completely at Closing Time (a.k.a. Pick Up Time). This has been a wonderful community builder over the past couple of months!

Spring time means many more outside activities! Mondays we go on nature walks through the vernal trail. We began planting in the garden and harvested the first few stalks of asparagus. The "big plant" comes in the next couple of weeks; where we will develop our Three Sisters Garden and plant squash and potatoes for the fall. The students are very ready to get their hands dirty!

Two big projects to look forward to in May at Eddy NYA are a talent show and painting flowers for the entryway to Brewster's Arts Center. May 17th, the next half day at Eddy, students will have the opportunity to

share their talents with their classmates. On Tuesdays and Thursdays students will be painting wooden flowers that will be used to line the walkway to the Brewster art center. We are excited to partner with this committee and for students to see their works of art when visiting the pool this summer.

Please put your child's name in clothing they might remove while at NYA, i.e., coats, sweatshirts, mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, winter boots, etc. If there is a name in them, we can reunite the clothing with your child. Use a marker to write their name on a label, get preprinted labels and iron them in, etc. It would be a shame if a child were to lose a holiday gift from Santa, parents, grandparents... We also request that you put their name on water bottles. We would love to have a completely empty lost and found basket. Thank you!

