

BULLDOG WELLNESS

JANUARY 2023

Supporting the Academic, Social, and Emotional Health of
Grant Elementary Students, Teachers, and Families.

ISSUE 26



Upcoming

- 1/3: First Day of School!
- 1/5: Peer Leadership Team Meeting
- 1/6: No School - Teacher Work Day
- 1/11-1/13: Class Spelling Bees
- 1/12: Prevent Child Abuse Utah Opt-OUT Forms Due
- 1/16: No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/18: Science Fair
- 1/23-1/26: Prevent Child Abuse Utah Presentations
- 1/26: Peer Leadership Team Meeting
- 1/27: No School - Professional Development Day for Teachers

NEW YEAR - FRESH START HABIT BUILDING ROUTINES & STRATEGIES

Did you make a new year's resolution or intention this year? If you did and you're having a hard time sticking to it, you're not alone. Changing patterns is incredibly difficult. In the "Building Better Habits" edition of the magazine *Breathe* writer Juliana Kassianos highlights seven tips in building new routines. These small steps will help to create patterns and habits to establish new routines;

1. **Practice mindfulness:** Being mindful of our actions has a powerful effect on identifying positive and negative patterns. Kassianos suggests making a list of both the positive and negative patterns and behavior you notice yourself doing, and then selecting one item from the negative side to work on changing.
2. **Develop a strategy:** Thinking of that one action or pattern you'd like to change, write down the action and reward of a more positive habit you'd like to replace it with. Select something very rewarding, and make sure to identify check points to keep up the motivation!
3. **Value versus cost:** Write about how the new habit will improve the quality of your life and why it's important. Also, write about the cost associated with continuing with the more negative habit / patterns.
4. **Mental rehearsal:** Imagine yourself making this change and participating in the positive habit and action. Take the time to do this by using all your senses (close your eyes and see yourself doing the thing: what will you see, feel, hear, taste, etc as you do this positive thing).
5. **Take action:** Schedule time in to rehearse - and then do - the thing!
6. **Time to reflect:** Spend time weekly to reflect on the progress you've made with this habit. Journal about your experiences.
7. **Accountability partner:** Share your experiences with a friend weekly (schedule it in). Once you've established strong patterns towards this new habit, share your success with them and treat yourselves! (Spa day or night out without the kids anyone?)



Community Connections

Go Zen is one of my favorite online resources for teachers, parents, mental health professionals, and students. The online platform hosts a variety of tools (some for purchase and many others for free!) to help build resilient thoughts, mindfulness practices, emotional intelligence, impulse control, and other life skills. One of their newest offerings is called Teen Toks, which is mobile app that hosts mental health videos made by teens. The app is free or you can pay for an upgraded unlimited service. The app has videos addressing anxiety and stress, body image, confidence and self worth, conflict and communication, feelings, friendships and belonging, gratitude and hope, motivation and goal setting, negative thoughts, school and grades, sleep, social anxiety, social media and devices, and meditations. I cannot say that I've watched every video - I haven't - and new content is added each week. However, each video I have seen holds valuable insight and could be helpful to many of our students! If this sounds interesting to you check it out and let me know what you think!



Prevent Child Abuse Utah Presentations

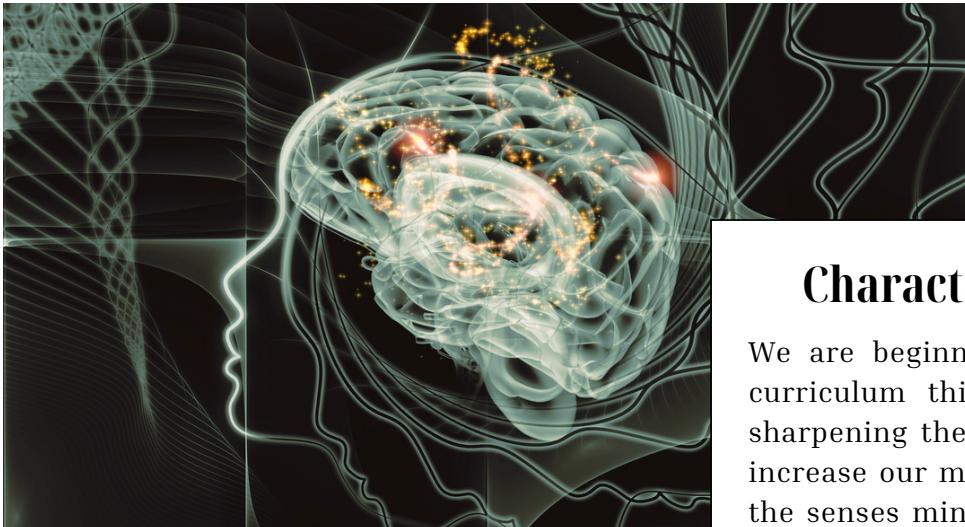
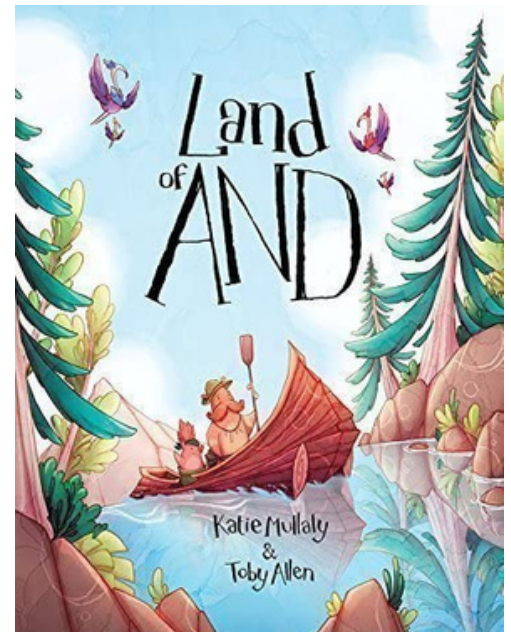
In accordance with Law 53G-9-207 and directives from Murray City School District, Grant Elementary students will be receiving body safety and child abuse prevention training between January 23-26, 2023. Murray City School District has chosen to use Prevent Child Abuse Utah (PCAU) to provide these trainings. Presentations will take place by grade level and will be facilitated by Mrs. Marsh who has been trained in the PCAU curriculum. Please see the letter sent home with your child for details on these presentations and the curriculum. Parents are invited to sit in on presentations and/or view the curriculum in advance if they would like. To find out what time your students' class will receive presentations please contact your school's main office or contact Mrs. Marsh directly.

If you do NOT want your child to take part in the body safety and child abuse prevention presentations, please complete the form sent home and return it to your child's teacher no later than January 12, 2023.



Local Author Spotlight

Katie Mullaly is a Utah based author and has self published a series of 4 children's book in the "Land of" series. These books are titled *Land of And*, *Land of Or*, *Land of Now*, and *Land of I Am*. Each of these books focuses on things like inclusion, making hard choices, being mindful and present, and finding your authentic self. She has another book, *Land of Enough*, coming soon! The illustrations by Toby Allen are remarkably fun and delightful. Kids and adults alike will be enchanted by worlds created by Mullaly's and Allen's imaginations!



May is Mental Health Awareness Month: Possible Parent Night??

I (Mrs. Marsh) am thinking about hosting a parent (and teacher, staff, etc) night in May. This event would be focused on what our community wants. I am gathering feedback on what you may like to learn about and discuss. I have adapted the survey regarding parent library materials to include questions about this event. I would love to hear from you! [Click here for the survey.](#) Thank you!



Character Education: Mind UP

We are beginning the next unit in the MindUP curriculum this month. This unit is all about sharpening the senses and using these senses to increase our mindfulness skills. Being able to use the senses mindfully helps the PreFrontal Cortex, so that we are better at decision making, problem solving, and learning. This month we will focus on "mystery sounds" to help strengthen our mindful listening skills. This, in turn, builds self-awareness and self-management skills because students have greater ability to intentionally tune into the various sounds around them.

We will also talk about the RAS, the reticular activating system, which helps connect the brain stem to the prefrontal cortex and other parts of the brain. It is a mechanism for keeping the brain awake and alert and is the brain's attention focusing center. The input received from the senses is sorted by the RAS and sent to the appropriate location in the conscious brain, or is blocked if the information is irrelevant. With so many things going on all the time, this is an important job! Strengthening these skills and focusing the RAS will help redirect students to remain focused and successful in school and life!

Upcoming lessons will focus on mindful smelling and mindful tasting - students *cannot wait* for that!