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— MONTHLY —

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud | November 30, 2018

Message from the Director



Randy Vetsch

In a recent on-line edition of Education Week, Peter DeWitt blogged an article titled [Kids Need Play and Recess. Their Mental Health May Depend On It.](#) DeWitt discusses the increasing numbers of students with mental health issues and what he feels schools could do to address this:

A recent NPR Education Series broadcast states, 'Up to one in five kids living in the U.S. shows signs or symptoms of a mental health disorder in a given year.'

It would be very easy to cite the multitude of reasons why our schools are so incredibly susceptible to the rise of mental health issues in children and adolescents. We can reference the noteworthy increases of screen time with technology, social media, cyber-bullying, diabetes and obesity in children, school shootings, standardized tests and the hyper-focus on academic scores in schools. However, I believe there is one noteworthy reason that has contributed to this mental health crisis like no other, recess and play are on the endangered species list in our public schools. Over the past fifty years in the United States, recess and children's free play with other children has declined significantly... I implore superintendents and principals to focus on the benefits children receive outside of the classroom and on the playground. Indoor/outdoor free play and recess benefits the development of physical, emotional, academic and social skills.

As you know, at Athlos Academy our approach empowers students to live fulfilling, responsible, and successful lives by building on the three foundational pillars, which encompass the development of all the aforementioned skills. Athlos students participate in professionally developed, age-appropriate athletic curriculum throughout the week; our students take part in 45 minutes of free play; and they're learning social-emotional skills through the development of the Performance Character traits. Whether at school, in social situations, or at home, it's important children are provided with the resources and ability to be intentional about their health and character. We appreciate all you do at home to uphold the Athlos model and to support your child's education and well-being.

The mission of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is to provide high quality educational opportunities for the whole child built on the three foundational pillars of Prepared Mind, Healthy Body, and Performance Character.



UPCOMING EVENTS

PTA CRAFT FAIR AND BAKED GOODS SALE | DEC. 1

The PTA is hosting a craft fair and baked goods sale on December 1 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Athlos Academy gym. To volunteer, visit <https://bit.ly/2ACFD4u>. If you have any questions, please email athlosacademystcloudpta@gmail.com.

NEW BUS ROUTES | DEC. 3

Metropolitan Transportation Network will be implementing new bus routes beginning December 3. Postcards with new bus numbers, pick up/drop off times, and bus stop locations were mailed to parents by the bus company.

Please plan to have your child at their bus stop five minutes prior to the scheduled time. We appreciate your patience the first week as we adapt to these new bus routes. There may be some delays initially; however, we are confident that the changes will help make your child's busing experience safer and more efficient in the long run.

If you have any questions, please contact the school front office at (320) 281-4430.

NO SCHOOL | DEC. 7

Staff professional development day. No school for students.

WINTER BAND CONCERT | DEC. 13

Join us for the 6th and 7th grade Winter Band Concert from 7 to 8 p.m. in the Athlos Academy gym.

Band students, please arrive at the school by 6:30 p.m. and meet in Ms. Scheevel's music room wearing dress clothes (i.e. dress/skirt, slacks, polo/dress shirt) or Athlos uniform.

WINTER CONCERT | DEC. 18

Join us for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade Winter Concert from 2 to 3 p.m. in the Athlos Academy gym.

Students who are performing are permitted to wear dress clothes during the school day, as there will not be time to change before the performance. Your student may also wear their Athlos uniform.

WINTER BREAK | DEC. 24 - JAN. 1

No school for students or staff.

SCHOOL RESUMES | JAN. 2

School is back in session.

BUS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Student safety in transporting your child to and from school is one of our primary concerns. However, we also need your assistance in setting expectations about behavior on the bus with your students. The bus is an extension of the school day, and we will be enforcing the bus ridership rules to ensure a safe and positive ride for all students. Riding the bus is a privilege, and if students do not follow the rules, they will not be allowed

COUNSELING SERVICES AND THERAPY



Sharon Raugutt

We're excited to announce that Athlos Academy will be partnering with Sharon Raugutt from The Village Family Service Center to provide counseling services and therapies to students in need. Having previously worked closely with schools, Sharon is delighted to have the privilege of providing school-based mental health services for Athlos Academy students, as well as working with staff to facilitate student success.

Sharon Raugutt is a licensed counselor that has been providing therapy for children and families through The Village Family Service Center for more than seven years. Sharon has experience with diverse mental health diagnoses and has frequently worked with children with issues pertaining to ADHD, oppositional behavior, anger, anxiety, autism, depression, divorce, bullying, attachment, and trauma. Sharon specializes in Animal Assisted Play Therapy (TM) interventions through the assistance of her two therapy dogs, Citrus and Teagan, who are registered with Pet Partners.

Sharon has a master's degree in Professional Counseling from Liberty University and is licensed in Minnesota as a Professional Counselor. She enjoys spending her leisure time with her family and playing with her dogs, cats, and horses at her rural residence.

If you have questions about the therapy dog program or want to discuss having your child receive this service, please contact Carrie Cremers, school social worker, at 320-281-4430 ext. 9205 or

PARENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud currently has many volunteer needs. We have multiple teachers who need parents to assist in classrooms, Driveline, and with PTO events.

Athlos families are encouraged to donate 30 hours of their time each year in service to the school. Some ways you can volunteer include but are not limited to:

- Helping setup for school events
- Assisting teachers in building classroom kits at home

- Reading with children after hours
- Offering to tutor students
- Participating on a committee
- There's a lot to do, and we need your help!

[Learn more about how important volunteers are to schools.](#)

If you're not sure about where to start with volunteering, message your child's teacher directly or simply visit or call the front office at: 320-281-4430.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES STARTS WITH SCHOOLS

Guest editorial by Randy Vetsch, featured in the November 26, 2018 edition of the St. Cloud Times

When thinking about culture within a school, the focus is often on students, staff and parents, and does not take into account the larger community.

If our goal as educators is to help shape students into citizens who are active in contributing to society, not finding ways to create a school culture that includes the larger community is a mistake that needs to be addressed.

With this goal in mind, it's important to start a dialogue about what exactly a school's responsibility is to the greater community, and how can community partnerships help benefit our students in intrinsic and intentional ways.

At Athlos Academy, we are working to bridge the gap between our school community and the larger community through a number of efforts. It is our goal to model for our students the role of a school in the community and the responsibility of an individual to their community. Finding ways to serve the members of our community is essential to help our students foster character traits like leadership, humility, initiative and integrity.

One effort we have begun to help serve our community is to partner with local organizations

serving individuals in need. Recently, we concluded our second annual donation drive benefiting Anna Marie's Alliance, a women and children's shelter in the St. Cloud area. We not only encouraged Athlos students, staff and families to participate in the donation drive, but opened our doors to the larger community, offering a space for them to drop off donations.

Students participated in the drive by collecting and sorting items, taking the time to learn about the resources in our community while reflecting on the different life circumstances of individuals in our community and delivering donations to the shelter. As we continue into the school year and the holiday season, we continually search for new community partnerships and ways to serve those in need.

Another effort our school has embraced is intentionally recognizing and celebrating the culture and diversity in our community.

On several occasions throughout the year, we host cultural community celebrations, where we invite our school community and the public into Athlos to celebrate diversity. The events include cultural food offerings, family activities and resources and opportunities for members of our community to come together and discuss ways to constantly improve area relationships and resources.