



Paw Prints

Grant Ranch School
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Denver, CO 80123

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February 2017

GRANT RANCH SCHOOL ECE-8

About Paw Prints 2016-2017

These publications are available online @
http://grantranch.dpsk12.org/?page_id=432
Grant Ranch Webpage - <http://grantranch.dpsk12.org>



Paw Prints is a monthly newsletter for Grant Ranch School. This is an important communication link for parents and includes important happenings at our school.

You can read, download, and print this newsletter monthly on the Grant Ranch Webpage.

<http://grantranch.dpsk12.org>

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Message From the Principal

Dear Students, Families, and Community of Grant Ranch School,

It is with great honor that I introduce myself as your next school leader. I have been a resident of Grant Ranch for twelve years. My family and I moved to Grant Ranch because of the community and the school. My children all attended Grant Ranch and now my grandson does too.

As well as being a parent and grandparent, I have served in many roles in the Denver Public Schools and am a graduate of Abraham Lincoln High School. The roles varied from part-time custodian, paraprofessional and teacher. These experiences have provided me with a unique and diverse perspective of the people support we provide in schools. My commitment to children runs very deep as evidenced by the fact that I began working for the school district in 1981. Currently, I am the Executive Director of the Culture, Equity, and Leadership Team. I missed the daily buzz of school life and so decided it was time to serve in a school role once again.

I served as Principal at Godsman Elementary for seven years working with a dedicated team to move the school from turnaround status to meeting expectations during my tenure. I developed several leaders in the process. Several teachers have gone on to become Teachers Leaders, Assistant Principals and Principals, as well as one becoming an Instructional Superintendent. Together, along with our parents and community, we created a school that focused on student growth and development while ensuring a safe, clean and orderly learning environment.

Prior to that, I was an Assistant Principal at Lake Middle School where I learned that the needs of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders are both different and yet very similar to elementary school children. While the content grows more complex as students move through the grade levels, the need for trusted relationships with the adults in the school are the same. This opportunity provided me with an ECE - 8th grade lens into the needs of students from four years of age to twelve.

Grant Ranch School is a special place for me and my family. I look forward to creating a rigorous and caring environment once again. To have a child for ten years as a student provides great opportunity to develop strong bonds with the student and his or her family. My door is always open. I would love to hear about your hopes and dreams for your child's education. My email is patricia_hurrieta@dpsk12.org if you would like to contact me prior to the beginning of the school year. I look forward to hearing about what you love about GRS and what changes you would suggest.

Respectfully,

Patricia Hurrieta



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Upcoming Dates

February 10 Father/Daughter Dance 6:00 - 8:00pm

February 20 No School - President's Day

February 23 2 - 5th Grade Band and Middle School Choir Concert 6pm

March 2 Parent Teacher Conferences 3:30 - 7:30 pm

March 6 PTO/FACE Committee Meeting 6:00 - 8:00 pm

March 9 Grant Ranch Showcase Night 5:00 - 7:00 pm



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FACE Committee (Family and Community Engagement)

The FACE Committee will meet monthly to bring together families, students, and faculty. All families are invited to join the monthly meetings. The committee meets the first Monday of each month 6:00 pm, just prior to the monthly PTO meeting.

The FACE Committee is currently planning a Grant Ranch Showcase night for Thursday, March 9. Details will be posted on the Grant Ranch web page and letters will be sent home with students later this month.

PTO News -

- **Father/Daughter Dance** Friday, February 10 7:00-9:00 pm. This year's Father/Daughter Dance will be a Hawaiian Luau theme. The dance is for girls and their dads (grandfathers, uncles, etc.) Dancing, desserts, refreshments, and a complimentary photo will be part of this fun evening.
- **Save the Date!** The PTO Annual Read-A-Thon will take place on Friday, April 28 from 8:00 am – 2:45 pm. This event will kick off with a Grandparents Tea at 7:00 am. More details to follow!
- **PTO Needs Volunteers!** All families are welcome to join the PTO meetings held on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm. If you are unable to attend but can help with PTO events, please contact Aubrey Vormittag, PTO volunteer coordinator @ AUBREY_VORMITTAG@dpsk12.org
- **King Soopers reloadable gift cards** - Do you shop at King Soopers? Please get a Grant Ranch School (GRS) reloadable gift card for \$5.00 (the 5.00 is preloaded in the card). Invite your friends and family to participate too! GRS-PTO receives 5% from every dollar spent to support GRS. **To purchase** these special cards, contact Audrey Jessen, PTO Treasurer audreydunbar@hotmail.com - Please specify GRS King Sooper Cards



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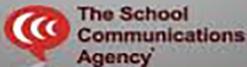
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News from Music - Ms. Brouillette

Looking for Beanie Babies

Ms. Brouillette is looking for 30 or so gently used beanie babies or beanie baby sized stuffed animals to use in her classroom as beat buddies. If you have one or more that you wouldn't mind donating, she would appreciate it. Please turn them into the music room.

2. 5th Grade Band and Middle School Choir Concert – February 23rd, 6 p.m.

The 5th grade band and middle school choir Concert will be held on February 23rd, at 6 p.m., in the cafeteria. This concert is a required part of each student member's grade. 5th grade band members should arrive by 5:30 p.m. for attendance and warm ups and middle school choir members should arrive by 5:45 p.m. All students are expected to be on time and to dress in appropriate concert attire. All of this information was given out to students last week to take home to their families. If your family did not receive it, please contact Ms.

Brouillette: sheri_brouillette@dpsk12.org.

Support Our Performing Ensembles through Concert Etiquette

Our performing ensembles work extremely hard on the music that they present at our music concerts. Here are some ways you, as an audience member, can support all of our students' hard work:

1. Stay for the entire concert and support all of the ensembles that are performing.
2. Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices. Give our students your full attention.
3. Do not talk during the concert.
4. Please do not use flash photography during the performance. An opportunity to take photos will be provided at the end of the concert.
5. Please keep younger friends and family members off of the stage, and if they are being distracting, escort them out of the cafeteria as quickly and quietly as possible.

Thank you for supporting all of our young musicians!



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Children and Nature: Who Let the Kids Out?

Are your children spending too much time inside? Learn the high cost of nature deficit disorder - and how easily you can avoid it by getting your kids outdoors.

by: Connie Matthiessen, GreatSchools.org | October 28, 2016

You've probably had this experience: The kids have been cooped up all morning and now you're heading out to the park, just to get them outside. In the car, they squabble and sulk — the oldest doesn't want to go, the second complains about the third's singing, the third begins to cry — and you're on the verge of losing it. No one, you're convinced, will make it back from this outing alive.

But when the kids pile out of the car, everything changes. They begin running around, exploring, getting dirty, discovering rocks, and making up games. When it's time to pack up, everyone is cold, muddy, and hungry but miraculously transformed.

What happened, exactly? Call it the restorative power of nature. Many parents observe these positive effects every day. Since Florida mother and writer Dianne Venetta created an organic garden in her back yard, it's been a major draw for both of her children — though in different ways. "My son gets down in the dirt and finds bugs and bees and worms, and [he] wants to learn everything about them," she says. "My daughter is more of an observer — she likes to photograph and draw everything she sees."

Heather Reed, who lives in Texas, says her son Timmy begs to go outside every day, and has since he was very small. Timmy, now five, has autism and developmental delays; he doesn't speak. When he wants to go outside, he grabs her hand and leads her to the door. "He loves watching the water in the pool ripple and the shadows that are created from sunlight falling on objects," Reed says. "He doesn't need a reason to be outside; he just wants to be there." After he's spent time outdoors, Timmy is more relaxed and tends to interact more, she says.

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Children and Nature *continued...*

A growing body of research supports anecdotal evidence of nature's therapeutic effects — on children, adults, and communities as a whole. Scientists at the University of Illinois' Landscape and Human Health Laboratory, for example, found that time out of doors reduces symptoms in children with ADHD. They also demonstrated a link between exposure to nature and increased self-discipline in girls, and a third study found that vegetation reduces crime in urban communities. Research by University of Rochester scientists even found evidence that nature makes people more caring.

Nature deficit disorder

But despite the evidence, many children today have little contact with the natural world. In his groundbreaking 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv explored the fundamental role nature plays in stimulating kids' imaginations and creativity, promoting health, and building resistance to stress and depression.

In *Last Child in the Woods*, Louv coined the term "nature deficit disorder," which he defined as "the human costs of alienation from nature, among them: diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses." Louv is quick to point out that nature deficit disorder is not a medical or psychological diagnosis, but a name he's given to what he sees as an increasingly widespread social condition. He believes this condition plays a role in rising rates of childhood obesity, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), depression, and other physical and developmental issues.

Louv points out that children today spend far more time indoors than their parents did. (According to the Children and Nature Network, a national nonprofit co-founded by Louv, only six percent of children ages nine to 13 play outside on their own in a typical week.) Increased urbanization, overscheduled calendars, parental fears about crime and other hazards, and the lure of electronic media have driven kids indoors and away from the natural world. "For a new generation," he writes, "nature is more abstraction than reality. Increasingly, nature is something to watch, to consume, to wear — to ignore."

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Children and Nature *continued...*

Findings by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation support Louv's bleak portrait of young lives spent indoors — and plugged in. Kaiser researchers found that American children ages eight to 18 spend an average of seven hours and 38 minutes a day using “entertainment media,” including TVs, movies, computers, video games, cell phones, and MP3 players. The amount of time kids spent on electronic media had increased by an hour from the previous study in 2004 — and researchers didn't even include the amount of time kids spend texting in these calculations.

Kyle Morrison, an exercise physiologist who works with obese children and teens at the Healthy Weight Center at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan, sees the effects of nature deficit disorder in his practice every day. “A lot of the kids I see are completely out of touch with nature,” he says. “Many of these kids live in areas with gang activity and other types of urban violence. Their parents are working all the time and they don't want the kids going out, even to the local park, because they think it's too dangerous. Families can't afford to go on vacation or pay for summer camp, so these kids are staying home all day, sitting in front of the TV or playing video games.” The result is teenagers with obesity and related health problems, including prediabetes symptoms and sleep apnea. Many also have asthma, a condition that Morrison believes is exacerbated by lack of exercise and lack of exposure to allergens they would routinely encounter if they spent more times outside. He estimates that 30 to 40 percent of the kids he sees suffer from depression and/or other anxiety disorders as well.

Louv's thesis clearly struck a chord — *Last Child in the Woods* became a national best seller, received awards, and was translated into ten languages — and has helped inform a growing movement of parents and educators who want to combat nature deficit disorder.

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Children and Nature *continued...*

Go out and play

Doctor's Orders — Kyle Morrison works with his patients on lifestyle changes like increasing exercise and improving eating habits; he also beats the bushes to find scholarships for summer camps, in hopes that a few of his patients will have the opportunity to spend a week of summer outdoors. Beyond the human toll of nature deficit disorder, health professionals like Morrison are concerned about the financial costs of treating people for conditions like obesity, diabetes, asthma, and depression. A growing number of physicians are treating nature deficit disorder the way they treat other maladies: by prescribing time-out-of-doors for patients — adults and kids alike.

Green Hour — Many national environmental groups have started campaigns to encourage kids and families to spend more time outside. The National Wildlife Federation, for example, recommends that kids spend at least an hour a day out of the house, which they call the “Green Hour.” The Sierra Club’s Building Bridges to the Outdoors program is a nationwide effort to give every child an outdoor experience. And the Outdoor Alliance for Kids (OAK), recently kicked off a Facebook campaign called Get Your Nature On to inspire kids to spend more time outside.

Wilderness School — Bay Area Wilderness Training (BAWT) provides wilderness training for teachers and youth leaders; it also has a lending “library” where groups and teachers can borrow outdoor equipment, including backpacks and tents, for free. Teachers and youth leaders from all over the Bay Area and as far away as Fresno and Los Angeles come to BAWT for training and to borrow gear. Since founding BAWT in 1999, executive director Kyle MacDonald says he’s seen an increase in the number of schools committed to getting kids into the wilderness. Macdonald started BAWT specifically for inner city kids because, as a youth leader and wilderness guide, he’d seen the powerful effect that nature could have. “It’s really profound,” Macdonald says. “You see kids’ faces open up, their backs straighten. You see it in their interactions with each other: the mild bullying, the frustrated nitpicky behavior — all that goes away when they connect with something larger than themselves.”

For Macdonald, it’s about the future — not just for young people but for the entire planet. “If we raise a generation of kids whose activities are all indoors, they’ll never develop a relationship with the environment — they’ll see no reason to care. Connecting kids to the out of doors in a way that makes them realize, ‘this is fun, this is a place I want to be’ — that’s going to create a generation of environmental stewards.”