

THE KI REPORT

A newsletter on Kindness and Inclusion for Root Elementary parents and families.

Character Word of the Month: Courage

The ability to face and overcome your fears with bravery.

Lessons from Lavender

The character word for January is courage. In group this month, we will be discussing courage and all the ways in which courage comes into action. Courage is the ability to do something that scares you and might make you feel uncomfortable. When talking about this with students, I ask the question, "What are some situations that come to mind when you think of courage?" We discuss taking deep breaths to help us gain control and give us an extra boost to gather courage. We also talk about how we use courage in the situations that they share when answering the question. At home, you can talk about different situations where courage may be needed and how it helps us. You can expand your students ideas of courage by having conversations about where in their everyday life it may come in handy. Examples of these situations are: making friends, standing up for yourself and others, telling someone how they make you feel, or trying new things.

Reading Suggestions:

Sheila Rae, the Brave, by Kevin Henkes
 The Recess Queen, by Alexis O'Neill
 Don't Want to Go, by Addie M. Sanders

You can follow what I'm teaching on Root's website under the counseling tab. If you need assistance of any kind, please contact me at 479-445-1021 or at: jennifer.lavender@fayar.net



She Walked With Courage

Elizabeth Eckford had just finished pressing her skirt she made special for her first day of school. In her community, she and her family were known to be expert seamstresses, and she wanted to look nice for the occasion. She would be one of the first black students to attend a previously all white Little Rock Central High School.

It was September 4th, 1957, approximately three years after the Supreme Court ruled racial segregation to be unconstitutional. Little Rock was slated to be one of the first southern cities to begin the desegregation of its schools, but pushback from segregationists remained, causing delay after delay in its initiation. Under law, Elizabeth and other fellow black students had a legal right to attend school with their white peers. Therefore, Elizabeth and eight others, who would later become known as the Little Rock Nine, bravely enrolled at Little Rock's Central High School.

On their first day, Elizabeth and the other eight students were supposed to enter the school together, but the message of a change in meeting location never made it to Elizabeth. Unbeknownst to her, she would be facing an incredibly angry mob of people all alone. This would require a level of bravery and courage many of us will never come to know.

Yet, she got off the bus, and she walked. On her way to school, Elizabeth was spat on. She was followed by hostile crowds yelling and chanting racial obscenities. And still, she kept walking. Elizabeth was never able to enter the building that day. She would later attend Central High School, but continue to face attacks affecting both her emotional and physical wellbeing. Even still, she faced her fears knowing her presence at Central High School was a crucial first step in propelling the desperately needed change toward racial equality.

The actions and words of many that day were frightening; however, when viewing the day's iconic photos, some of the more disturbing sights were pictures of bystanders and onlookers doing nothing. This is a good reminder to stand up when we see wrongdoing and be a helper. Talk to your children about how stepping in and supporting someone who is being hurt by others requires courage. When something doesn't feel right, speak up. When someone needs support and help, reach out. It takes courage to do many things. For some children, it takes courage just to get off the bus, and for others, it takes courage to show someone that they don't have to get off the bus alone.

