



**Antelope Valley
Learning Academy**



Inside this issue:

Raising a Caring and Compassionate Child	2-4
Groundhog Day	5
Presidents' Day	5
Black History Month	6
Counseling Corner	7-8
Physical Fitness Testing	9
School Events	10
Open House	11
National School Choice Week	12

Mark your calendar:

- * Feb. 5—End LP 8
- * Feb. 8-11—Blue Week
- * Feb. 12—Lincoln's Birthday: NO SCHOOL
- * Feb. 15—President's Day: NO SCHOOL
- * Feb. 26—Field Trip to Lancaster Blvd.
- * Feb. 29—Field Trip to Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust
- * March 2—Dr. Seuss Read Across America
- * March 22, 23—Physical Fitness Testing (5th, 7th & 9th grades)
- * April 4-8—Spring Break
- * April 11-22—SBA Testing

AV Learning Academy Parent Post

Volume 8, Issue 6

February, 2016



Principal's Corner

February is a busy month! There is so much to learn about this month, from the legend of Groundhog Day, to President's Day, to Black History Month...this edition of the Parent Post is full of learning!

February 2nd is Groundhog Day. This is a popular tradition in the United States as it is the day that the famous groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, comes out of his hole after a long winter nap to look for his shadow. According to legend, if Phil sees his shadow (if it's a sunny day), then there will be six more weeks of winter. If he does not see his shadow (if it's a cloudy morning), then spring has arrived.

Happy President's Day! This month, we are taking a 4-day weekend to celebrate Abraham Lincoln's birthday (Friday, February 12th) and President's Day in honor of George Washington (Monday, February 15th). You can help your child understand the significance of these two important men and the strides they made for civil rights and the American

political system by studying the government, our flag and our electoral system. You can go to this a website <http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/presidents-day> to find out more about the history of President's Day, along with pictures, videos, interesting articles, and more.

We are beginning our preparations for the Smarter Balanced Assessments. All AVLA students in grades 3 – 8 will be taking these assessments between April 11th and April 22nd. Please note that we begin assessing students the Monday we return from Spring Break, so please plan accordingly. Speaking of Spring Break, AVLA will be off the week of April 4th through the 8th. Our 11th grade students will take their SBAs beginning April 25th. In addition, we will be administering the Physical Fitness Test for all 5th, 7th, and 9th graders on March 22nd and 23rd at the Learn4Life Athletic Training Center, as well as the CST Science tests for all 5th, 8th and 10th grade students in May. Your Supervising Teacher will be providing you

with the important testing dates and other information, and you are encouraged to visit the Smarter Balanced Practice Tests website at <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/> and have your student log in to a practice assessment. In addition, please make sure your 5th, 7th and 9th grade students are practicing their mile run, sit-ups, push-ups, trunk lift, and shoulder stretch. See inside for descriptions of each of the activities.

Thank you for your commitment to your child's education and your support of our school and programs. We continue to work hard to meet the goals we have set, the commitments we have made, and to ensure that we are providing the educational programs that our students deserve and the parents and community expect.

If you have any questions or comments, my door is always open.

Erin Wade
Principal, AVLA

Character Counts—February



The pillar of character
for February is
CARING

Be kind •
Be compassionate and
show you care • Express
gratitude • Forgive
others • Help people in
need

Think of a heart



<http://charactercounts.org/sixpillars.html>

Raising a Caring and Compassionate Child

When it comes to kindness, you are your child's primary teacher. Here's how to bring out his warmth.



Learning Benefits

Sharing
Self Control
Compassion

Like many things, kindness is a quality that children learn over time and through practice. Thankfully, there are many things you can do to encourage your child to be a kinder, gentler person. Research has found that the desire to help and comfort comes just as naturally to humans as being self-centered or hurtful. "It's almost as though we're born predisposed to be upset by other people's pain," says Alfie Kohn, author of *The Brighter Side of Human Nature: Altruism and Empathy in Everyday Life*.

How Empathy Grows

Empathy — the ability to understand another person's feelings — develops over time. A 2 year old may try to comfort a crying playmate by offering her own pacifier or blankie. While she is not able to understand why her friend is crying, she remembers times when she felt sad and knows what comforts her. At 3, children are more aware of others, but they still have trouble relating to how others actually feel. They may delight, for example, in knocking down someone else's block tower and not understand why the child who built it is so upset.

By age 4, children can better understand when they've hurt someone and can sometimes offer an apology without being told. They are also quite empathic about another child's injuries. Stacey York, a child development instructor, recounts how a 4 year old came to class covered with bandages after falling off a two-wheeled bike while riding in the street. "First, there was amazement — 'You can ride a two-wheeled bike and you were riding in the street?' — and then empathy for how banged up she was."

By the time children are 5 or 6, they often can share more easily and take turns. And they are able to discuss what it means to be kind and can brainstorm ideas for how they might help people.

Strategies for Encouraging Kindness

The following suggestions will help you to teach your child about being goodhearted and compassionate. But in the words of author/psychologist Dr. Julius Segal, nothing "will work in the absence of an indestructible link of caring between parent and child."

Continued on page 3...

Raising a Caring and Compassionate Child

When you kiss your daughter's boo-boos or read cozy bedtime stories to your son, you are giving your children the base that enables them to reach out to others. "If a child has never felt understood by her parents or unconditionally loved, her own needs may continue to ring so loudly in her ears that she is deaf to the cries of other people in distress," Kohn says.

- **Believe that your children are capable of being kind.** "If you treat your kid as if he's always up to no good, soon he will be up to no good," Kohn cautions. "But if you assume that he does want to help and is concerned about other people's needs, he will tend to live up to those expectations."
- **Model positive action.** What you do and say is critical; let your child catch you in the act of kindness, such as driving an elderly neighbor to the store or offering a comforting word to a friend. Most parents start this role-modeling from day one. "They talk while feeding their baby, saying, 'a little bit of food for baby, a little bit of food for me,'" says York. This lays the foundation for a lifetime of give-and-take and openness with people."
- **Treat children with respect.** This can be as simple as alerting your child that playtime is almost over. "I always wince when I see parents suddenly decide it's time to leave the playground and snatch their children away abruptly because it's time to go home," Kohn says. "That's a disrespectful way to treat a human being of any size." You might also point out successful conflict resolution through real-world experiences. At home, for example, you could say to your child, "Mommy and Daddy don't always agree, but we listen to each other and treat each other with respect instead of putting each other down."
- **Coach your child to pay attention to people's facial expressions.** This is the first step in learning how to understand another's perspective. "We are more likely to reach out to other people in need when we are able to imagine how the world looks from someone else's point of view," Kohn says.
- **Let your children know often that how they treat others matters to you greatly.** For example, a child might think it's funny to see someone get splashed if a car drives by and hits a puddle. You can point out, "That lady is not laughing at what happened. Look at her face. She looks sad. Her clothes are dirty and wet now."
- **Don't let rudeness pass.** You might say, "Wow, that cashier must have had a really bad day to talk in such a mean voice to us at the supermarket. What do you think?" This teaches your child that when someone is nasty to you, you don't have to be mean in response.
- **Acknowledge kindness.** Be sure to show your child that you notice when someone does something nice. For example, if someone slows down to let you exit a parking lot at a busy intersection, say, "It was really nice of that driver to let me out." Likewise if your own child treats someone nicely, be sure to acknowledge and praise her effort.

Continued on page 4...

Raising a Caring and Compassionate Child

- **Understand that your child's perception of differences in others comes into play.** Young children notice differences in people, just as they notice them in animals and colors of crayons, so assume the best. If your child says something socially inappropriate, it's important to explore the comment calmly. First ask, "Why do you say that?" Then you can correct the misunderstanding by more fully explaining the situation.
- **Be sensitive to messages that your child picks up from the media.** Children are just as likely to imitate kind actions they see in movies and read about in books as they are to act out other types of scenarios. Be aware of the programs and movies your child watches and be available to talk about what they see. Also, encourage reading books that focus on caring and compassion.
- **Explain that calling someone names or excluding him from play can be as hurtful as hitting.** If you hear your child calling someone a "poo-poo head" in the sandbox, go right into problem-solving mode with both children. Point out how the child who was called a name is upset: "Can you see the tears on his face?" Recognize that the real problem may be that the name-caller wants the giant sand bucket. Ask, "If you want something, what's another way you can get it without hurting somebody else?" It's also important to make sure the child who has been called the name isn't feeling victimized, and encourage your child to apologize.
- **Avoid setting up competition within your family.** If you say, "Let's see who can clean up the fastest," you risk setting your kids up as rivals. "When children are pitted against one another in an effort to win at anything," Kohn says, "they learn that other people are potential obstacles to their success." Instead you could encourage them to work together to get the job done and praise them for their group effort.
- **Show children how to help people in need.** You can encourage your child to donate a toy he has outgrown to the annual toy drive, while you buy a set of blocks to give away. He can also help you make cookies for a shelter and come with you when you visit someone in the hospital or nursing home.

Be patient with your little ones, because kindness and compassion are learned and life presents challenging situations even to adults. Being a loving parent and a great role model will go a long way toward raising a wonderful, tolerant human being.

Article retrieved from

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/social-emotional-skills/raising-caring-and-compassionate-child>

Groundhog Day!

Groundhog Day is celebrated every year on February 2nd. The official groundhog lives in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. His name is Punxsutawney Phil. On February 2, Punxsutawney Phil comes out of his burrow at Gobbler's Knob - in front of thousands of followers from all over the world - to predict the weather for the rest of season.

According to legend, if Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow (the day is bright and sunny), there will be six more weeks of winter weather. If he does not see his shadow (the day is overcast), there will be an early spring.



The celebration of Groundhog Day began with Pennsylvania's earliest settlers. It stemmed from a combination of religious beliefs and facts associated with hibernating animals. They brought with them the legend of Candlemas Day.

*If Candlemas be fair and bright,
Come, Winter, have another flight;
If Candlemas brings clouds and rain,
Go Winter, and come not again.*

<http://www.apples4theteacher.com>

You can go to <http://www.groundhog.org/groundhog-day/about-groundhog-day/>, click on Groundhog Day, and find out all sorts of interesting information such as the history of Groundhog Day, past predictions, and also what Phil's 2016 prediction is.

Presidents' Day

Presidents' Day is an American holiday celebrated on the third Monday in February. It was originally established in 1885 in recognition of President George Washington, whose birthday is on February 22nd. Following his death in 1799, his birthday became a



permanent day of remembrance. Four chief executives—George Washington, William Henry Harrison, Abraham Lincoln, and Ronald Reagan—were born in February, so Presidents' Day is now popularly seen as a day to recognize the lives and achievements of all of America's chief executives, but the holiday falls between the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln, two of America's most

famous statesmen.

<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/presidents-day>

This year, AVLA is observing Lincoln's birthday and Presidents' Day over a 4-day weekend. AVLA will be closed on Friday, February 12th and Monday, February 15th in observance of the Presidents' Day weekend.



February is National Black History Month

2016 Theme – Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories



Black History Month, or National African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. The event grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history.

Origins of Black History Month

The story of Black History Month begins in 1915, half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States. That September, the Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and the prominent minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), an

organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by black Americans and other peoples of African descent. Known today as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), the group sponsored a national Negro History week in 1926, choosing the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The event inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize local celebrations, establish history clubs and host performances and lectures.

Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories

The history of African Americans unfolds across the canvas of America, beginning before the arrival of the Mayflower and continuing to the present. From port cities where Africans disembarked from slave ships to the battle fields where their descendants fought for freedom, from

the colleges and universities where they pursued education to places where they created communities during centuries of migration, the imprint of Americans of African descent is deeply embedded in the narrative of the American past. These sites prompt us to remember and over time became hallowed grounds.

The Association for the Study of African American Life & History has selected this annual theme to bring attention to the centennial celebration of the National Park Service and the more than twenty-five sites and the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom that are part of America’s hallowed grounds, including the home of the father of black history, Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

<http://asalh100.org/>

Counseling Corner

Submitted by Janelle Goodman, AVLA School Counselor



Tips for Building Healthy Self-Esteem in your child!

What is Self-esteem? Self-esteem is our beliefs about our self –how capable and loved we feel. It is our shield against life's challenges.

Of all the things we help our children learn and do, helping them to develop a healthy self-esteem is probably most important. This is because self-esteem affects all aspects of their lives – how they learn, how they interact with friends, how they treat others, how they problem solve, how they handle adversity, and how much they are willing to try new things. Here are six tips to help your child develop healthy self-esteem.

1. PRAISE your child

Notice when your child has done something well and tell them! Easy on the criticism. They should hear 5 positives for every 1 negative thing you say.

2. VALIDATE feelings

If your child gets a blow to their self-esteem, they need you to allow them to feel sad, hurt, or mad. After you can boost them up with positives.

3. CRITICIZE the behavior

When your child misbehaves, talk about the behavior, such as, "What you did was hurtful, and I know you are a nice kid. How can you make this better?" Do not label your child "bad."

4. Give your child chores

Children learn how to function in groups by learning how their own family cooperates. Set your child up to be a team player by giving age-appropriate chores at home. Offer praise for their work!

5. Give the gift of time

Your children know how busy you are, so when you find 10 minutes to listen about their day or play a game, they will feel worthy and loved. The gift of time spent is worth much more than the gift of money spent.

6. Avoid harmful comparisons

Do not compare your child to others, especially siblings. Instead of saying, "Why can't you be more like so-and-so?" try, "Do you notice that so-and-so does this?" Let your child know that it's okay to be different, and that you don't expect perfection.

(Taken from: Kayla Marston, M. ED, 1/26/2016)



Come and meet our School Counselor, Ms. Janelle Goodman!

When: Friday, February 5th from 10:00 AM—12:00 PM in Room 1



Stop by any time and enjoy a muffin and some OJ with Ms. Goodman

Counseling Corner, continued...

CHARACTER COUNTS

Contributed by School Counselor, Janelle Goodman

Fair or Unfair, That's Not Fair!

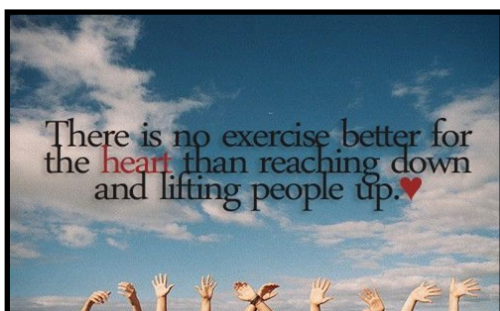
I wish I could have taken a snapshot of our students' facial expressions this past January as we learned about fairness. In our K-6 classes we read Dr. Seuss's book; "The Sneetches" and discussed the behavior happening between the Star Belly and non-Star Belly characters. Further, we discussed how it would feel to be excluded and ways we could show fairness to all in our school.

The 7th/8th grade students learned about fairness as we discussed discrimination, the Civil Rights movement, and what is "FAIR" and "UNFAIR." In the end, many of our students said inspiring thoughts about how to be FAIR. One student reminded us as we talked about treating others fairly and unfairly that, "We all have a heart." I could only think how very right that child was! We all have a heart that beats, gets hurt by words, and needs to know how much others CARE.

So as we adventure into February, let's build our character traits in our children by showing them ways to take CARE of themselves. February is also National Boost-Your-Self-Esteem Month and National Children's Dental Health Month.

This month try these fun activities with your children; 1. Make a list of the stuff you're good at. It can be anything from drawing, singing, reading, or telling a good joke. If you're having trouble with your list, ask a parent to help. 2. Chart your Brushes: Brush 2 minutes 2 times a day. Check out this website for a Brushing Calendar!

http://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/Public%20Programs/Files/NCDHM/NCDHM2016_Calendar_English.ashx



REMINDERS:

WEAR RED EVERY Friday this month to show your character trait: CARING

JUNIORS: Register for the SAT or ACT college entrance exams. See me for more details.

SENIORS: Apply for Financial Aid at WWW.FASFA.ED.GOV by March 2nd

Physical Fitness Testing (PFT)

Physical Fitness Testing—the PFT—is required for all 5th, 7th and 9th grade students. AVLA will be conducting the PFT on Tuesday, March 22nd and Wednesday, March 23rd, both days beginning at 10:00 AM at the Learn4Life Athletic Training Center. Students need to be prepared to run the mile and complete a series of exercises, including the curl-up, the push up, the trunk extensor, the back saver sit and reach, and the shoulder stretch. In addition, students will have their BMI (body mass index) calculated. With eight weeks until testing, if you have your child practice these activities twice a week, they'll be prepared to take and pass the PFT. Here are some pictures of the exercises your child will be expected to perform:

Curl-up



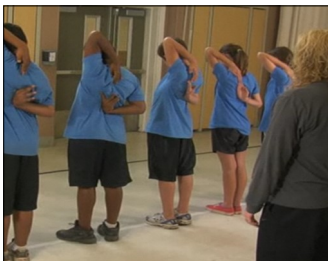
Trunk Extensor



Push-up



Shoulder stretch



Back Saver Sit & Reach

The current year Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ) charts and other information about the PFT are available on the California Department of Education PFT Web page at

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/pf/>.

For all 5th, 7th & 9th grade AVLA students

If you are a 5th, 7th or 9th grade student, you must take the PFT!

Join us at the Learn4Life Athletic Training Center on one of the above dates (not both)

Remember to wear comfortable clothing and athletic shoes as we will do the following activities:

- Mile run or walk
- Abdominal curl-ups
- Push-ups
- Trunk lift & shoulder stretch

*students will also be weighed and measured (BMI)



Tuesday,
March 22nd
OR
Wednesday,
March 23rd
at
10:00 AM

At the L4L Athletic
Training Center
42450 12th St. W
Lancaster



A.V. Learning Academy School Events...

Field Trip—Walking Tour of Lancaster Blvd

Friday,
February 26th
@8:45 AM
Rain or shine!

Put on your walking shoes and join Mrs. Kasper and Mrs. Walters as they Walk the Blvd!

Wear comfortable shoes and bring a picnic lunch.

Places we are visiting include a pet grooming business, the Sheriff Station, Fire Station #33, and American Heroes Park. We'll be going rain or shine! Bring an umbrella if necessary.

Meet at 8:45 AM in front of the library.

This is a family-friendly field trip and it's FREE! Sign up by emailing Mrs. Kasper at ekasper@avlearning.org or Mrs. Walters at kwalters@avlearning.org

Field Trip—The Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust

The only way to better the future is to learn from the past.

When: Monday, February 29th @11:00 AM

Where: Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust

100 S. The Grove Drive

Los Angeles, 90036

Time: Arrive by 10:45 AM, docent-led tour begins at 11:00 AM,

***Admission is FREE (donations recommended), Parking is free**



Monday,
February 29th
@11:00 AM

Dr. Seuss Read Across America

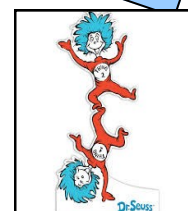
AVLA is celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday (March 2nd) by hosting a pajama and fuzzy slippers read-in. Wear your favorite jammies and your fuzzy slippers, bring your pillow and blanket, and let's get cozy as we read Dr. Seuss (and other) stories together and do some fun activities. Parents, you are invited, too (but you have to wear your jammies!)

When? Wednesday, March 2nd from 12:30—2:00 PM

Please RSVP to us by February 26th

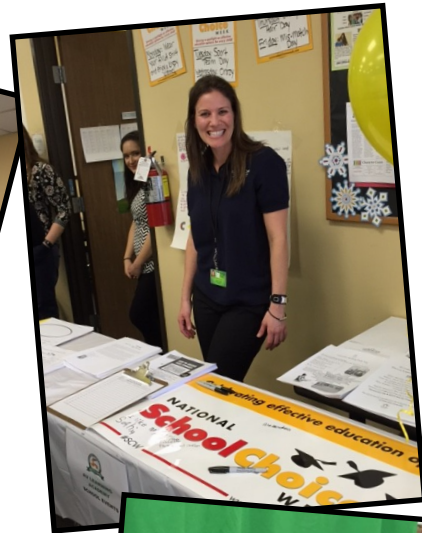
***ALL AVLA students and siblings are welcome to participate. Parents are required to attend and participate with their student.**

Wednesday,
March 2nd
@12:30 PM



Open House 2016

AVLA had a fantastic turn-out to this year's Open House event on Thursday, January 21st! We had over 80 people here, those 80 people brought in 8 new families, and 3 of those signed up! Thank you! We enjoyed pizza, cookies, a photo booth, and student performances. A great time was had by all!





January 25th—29th

Sports Team Day



School Spirit Day



Crazy Sock Day

Crazy Hair Day



Mis-Match Day

We ❤️ AVLA!

