

# Specials Newsletter



***It Takes Heart  
to be a Hero!***

## Physical Education - February Kicks off Jump Rope for Heart Challenge

Mr. Sankey

This is such a fun time of year in P.E. as we focus on healthy choices with food plate choices. We begin the Jump Rope for Heart challenge on February 1 and conclude at the end of the month. You will be seeing a handout coming home with information on signing up.

You can download the Kids Heart Challenge app or go to [heart.org/KHC](http://heart.org/KHC).

We've had a great time in team building with a Groups on the Move activity! It was exciting to see students take the challenge and accept the roles of leader of the group and follower of the group. Students worked in small groups to complete an exercise card with a variety of exercises. The challenge was for students to work together as a team by doing all exercises and counting together.

As always, feel free to reach out any time you have a question. Email is the best way to contact me. My email address is: [kevinsankey@choiceschools.com](mailto:kevinsankey@choiceschools.com).

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Black History in the Making

Mrs. Macias

All month long we will honor those that paved the way before and recognize leaders who are making a difference today! Each week students will learn about Black History in the Making from local black scientists, artists, business owners, and political leaders, all within Grand Rapids community.

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**ALL SPECIALS CLASSES CAN BE FOUND ON YOUR STUDENT'S CANVAS  
ACCOUNT FOR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES EITHER AT HOME OR AT SCHOOL!**

## Environmental Science - Animal Tracks and Space



Big brown bat  
(native to MI) rescue  
12/11/20

Mrs. Hasenbank

We kicked off the winter season in December with students learning to identify common animal tracks typically found around the Grand Rapids area. Animal tracks show up best in snow so winter is the perfect time to become an animal track detective! Common tracks included: rabbit, deer, squirrel, turkey (there has actually been a turkey in the NB woods a couple of years ago!), domestic cat and

dog. 🐾 If you go on a wintry walk with your child(ren), they will be happy to share with you what animal tracks they can identify!! This is one of our favorite skills we learn during the school year!

During this month of January, we focused on solar system exploration. Students learned and reviewed fun facts about the sun, such as it being a medium-sized and medium-temperature star at the center of our solar system, and the 8 planets orbiting it. We used a silly sentence as a fun way to remember the names of the planets and their order from the sun:

“**M**y **V**ery **E**xcited **M**other **J**ust **S**erved **U**s **N**achos:  
Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune.

The younger students enjoyed listening to REAL astronauts read stories from the International Space Station as part of the Story Time From Space literacy project by the Global Space Education Foundation. Upper elementary and middle school students were able to explore various parts of our solar system and beyond using NASA’s interactive exploration website. We ended the week with a fun trivia competition and students who remembered the most info won a tasty treat!

### Resources

“Exploring Our Solar System” by FreeSchool:  
<https://youtu.be/Qd6nLM2QIWw>

“Story Time From Space”:  
<https://storytimefromspace.com/library/>

NASA’s Interactive Space Exploration:  
<https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/solar-system/our-solar-system/overview/>

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## Eco Art - Art and the Science of Energy

Mrs. Graves



This month at New Branches, our environmental theme is energy. To follow this theme, we will be doing a variety of exciting projects that can capture energy in an illustration, sculpture, or moving artwork! Throughout the grades, we will be doing projects such as illustrating how an orchestra sounds, using vibrant colors, and lines to convey movement, and creating flip books by learning how a rapid succession of images can trick your brain into thinking it is seeing movement.

**Draw with Me!** Is officially back!

Join me every Friday from 2:00-3:00 pm on Zoom. The link for the meeting is located on your Eco-Art Canvas page under the “Zoom Meeting” button.



If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [kayleighgraves@choiceschools.com](mailto:kayleighgraves@choiceschools.com)



Rabbit Tracks (www.naturetracking.com)

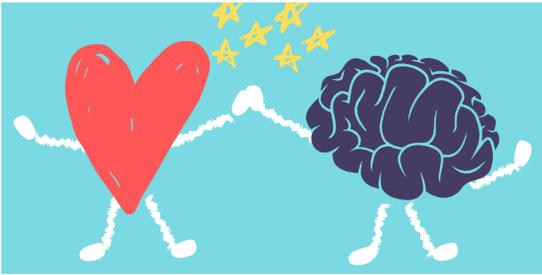
# Social Emotional Learning - Emotions and Response/Cause & Effect

Mr. Ritzema

Many may wonder what SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) is all about. This month we are finishing our study of emotions and responses, cause and effect, and diversity. Beginning on Feb. 22, we will begin our study of empathy – how to feel what someone else is feeling the way they feel it.

Classes are 50 minutes long and include Meet Up circle time where students share their thoughts on a particular topic as well as videos, sheets to color, songs, books, and even puppets.

Here are some fun home activities that you might consider to bolster your child's social-emotional skills. The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.



## Recognizing Feelings

Play Feeling Charades with your child, taking turns guessing the emotion the other person is demonstrating or describing. Use your entire body and/or tone of voice to demonstrate the emotion or describe the physical changes you experience.

Use a variety of “emotion words” to help your child name how he or she is feeling and how his or her body feels inside (stomach in knots, hot cheeks, butterflies in stomach).

Play music or dance to express a certain emotion and then switch to another emotion. Alternatively, play different types of music (such as upbeat or slow tempo) and ask your child how it makes him or her feel.

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# Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math - Ready for Mars Perseverance

Mr. Bell

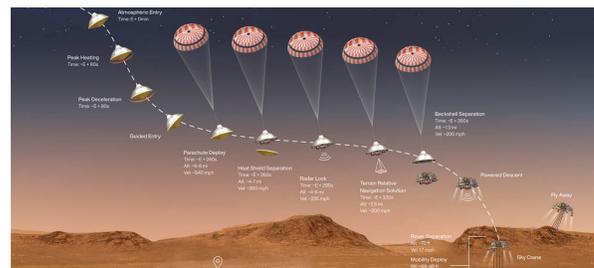
This month in STEAM, we are counting down the days to February 18th when the NASA lands the all new Mars Perseverance rover on our neighboring red planet. To prepare for the landing, we will be exploring our solar system by learning just how large it is. Students in second through fifth grade will make solar system scrolls, learning just how large our system is by scale.

## DID YOU KNOW?

1. Our star, the Sun, is huge but not the biggest! UY Scuti is the largest known star, 1,700 times larger than our star! Our sun is considered a yellow-white star and is made of hydrogen and helium.
2. Pluto is smaller in diameter than the continental United States. From Northern California to Maine is 2,900 miles (4,700km). Pluto is half of that, it's only 1473 miles (2,371km) across.
3. Pluto has what looks like a heart on its surface. Maybe Pluto is just looking for a Valentine!



4. When the Perseverance rover lands on Mars, it will mark 45 years of humans landing spacecrafts on the red planet! The first space craft to land on Mars was NASA's Viking which landed on June 19, 1976.



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