

For Immediate Release

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Murray Park Quest Wellness Day

Ripon, Wis. - May is Mental Health Awareness Month and students at Murray Park Quest Elementary (MPQ) participated in Wellness Day on Wednesday, May 10. The focus of the day was to highlight that stress is normal and mental health is a priority. Students were provided opportunities to learn and practice various coping skills. Through out the school year MPQ classroom guidance lessons have focused on mental health and wellness. Wellness Day was an opportunity to build upon those lessons.

The whole school gathered for a morning 'kickoff' in the gym where MPQ School Counselor, Amanda Eake, along with Lindsay Loewe and Ally Bares from Collaborative Wellness talked to students about mental health and the purpose of the day. Students experienced different stations of wellness activities in the morning which included:

- Creating calming bottles and painting positive affirmation rocks with a phrase that encourages them.
- Learning about using a wellness journal with Christine Skoog of Blue Lotus Counseling. Students chose a journal to decorate and keep.
- Lindsay Loewe and Ally Bares (Collaborative Wellness) hosted a Selfie Station and a time to visit with therapy dogs. Students made feelings monsters and enjoyed a 'puzzled by

mental health' activity.

- Tiffany Hoxie, a certified holistic nutritionist, talked with students about the importance of taking care of and fueling their bodies while they enjoyed a healthy snack.
- A scavenger nature walk where students searched for things they could touch, hear, see and smell.

The afternoon featured the Disney movie Inside Out which focuses on growing up and learning about handling the biggest feelings and emotions. Quiet, calming activities such as coloring, drawing, reading, doing puzzles, and journaling rounded out the day.

MPQ School Counselor Amanda Eake added "A conversation was also led about the light inside of us. Sometimes it's a steady flame, other times it is a tiny little glimmer, and at other moments it's a raging fire. Sometimes our lights start to dwindle and it can feel really hard to keep going and stay balanced and hopeful. In these moments we need to find something to lean on to keep our light going. It's important for us to protect and kindle our light but also share it with others. We can feed off each other's light and illuminate a path forward together!"

Students wrote down how they bring light to their own flames and how they can bring light to other's flames on index cards which will be used to create a giant flame to display at the school. It will remind students how to show support to others in their school community. Each student left the day with items and strategies they can use when they are in need of working through feelings and emotions.

The event was funded and made possible by a grant from the Nicole Moniz Memorial Fund for Mental Health through the Ripon Education Foundation.

Any comments or questions, please contact Dr. Mary Whitrock at (920) 748-4600.

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