October 6, 2006

Dear Parents,

This month, our selection for the Community Read, “Peppe the Lamplighter” by Elisa Bartone, is very special in several different ways. As many of you may know, October is nationally celebrated as “Italian Heritage Month”. This book tells the tale of an Italian-American immigrant family living in New York City during the early 1900’s and their struggle to survive in America. The main character, Peppe is determined to help support his family. By accomplishing this, he eventually earns the respect of his entire family. The book is also special because it was brought to the Community Read Committee’s attention by one of our very own staff members—Ms. Denise Palmeri.

The story begins with a young boy named Peppe who must help his struggling family. His mother has died, his father is ill and he has eight sisters. Determined to find work, Peppe searches his neighborhood looking for a job. He is finally given the opportunity to light the street lamps each night. Peppe’s father does not think that this is a worthy job for his son until one night when a frightening event shows the entire neighborhood the importance of lighting the lamps.

As we continue to grow and develop our school’s “Real Heroes” initiative, this month we will focus on the value/character trait of DETERMINATION. John Calvin Coolidge, the 30th President of the United States, stated that, “Persistence and determination are omnipotent (all powerful).” Thomas Alva Edison who still holds the record for patents stated, “Genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration.” When a person sets their mind to completing or accomplishing something, that drive can help to propel them along further & faster then just talent alone.
As you read or discuss “Peppe the Lamplighter” with your children this month, focus on the importance of DETERMINATION. Encourage the students to:

- Try, try and then try again.
- Determination doesn’t have to mean doing it alone. If you need help-ask.
- Be proactive instead of reactive. Think about the consequences of an action before you decide to do it.
- Remember that doing little things can be important too.
  
  *(Random Acts of Kindness)*

Coach Wooden believes that determination will help to ensure great accomplishments. On our “Pyramid to Success” coach Wooden states “slow and steady gets you ready.” Remember that we are our children’s the role models. We must practice what we preach. Happy Reading!

Ms. Scott

P.S.

I’d like to say thank you to everyone for all of your help in making our first Community Read this year a great success. Many teachers gave positive feedback on the book, “The Brand New Kid” and the students seemed to enjoy this selection as well. My conversations with the students were interesting as well as enlightening. Their ideas and perspectives on “friendship” are inspiring. A special thanks to Ms. Beinhorn, Ms. Fowler, Ms. Mavros, Ms. Voss, Mr. Grossman, Ms. Popkin & our 2nd & 7th grade students for being the first to collaborate and share their Community Read work as “buddy classes”!