



## Staying Connected

### Elementary School

**Photo Contest Get to know your Families-** Create a school wide photo contest. Invite families to participate in a fun, photo contest. Ask them to take a picture of their child/children reading a book in their favorite area. You could post the pictures on your class or school web page. This might be something fun to do along with Dr. Seuss's birthday on March 2. Prior to the activity send home a letter with the "rules" so that permission is granted to post the pictures, student's name, etc. You could be creative in choosing categories where families could enter their photos. Funniest place to read, Craziest place to read, Most Creative place to read, etc. For prizes you could hand out gift certificates to Scholastic Books.

**Thank Parents-** Send Thank You notes individually or publicly for their support, you could mention this in your weekly newsletter or web page. Recognize what families do to help your class and how it impacts students. One school in Sioux Falls has a Thank You Wall where families are recognized throughout the school year. It has a brief write up for each person as well as a picture of them. Children love to see their family photos in the hallways.

**"Parent Class Building Relationships With Families"** When introducing a new concept or math objective invite parents for a lesson covering the materials that you will be introducing to their student. This will familiarize families with the methods that you will be introducing and give them the opportunity to help their student at home with a new skill. A confidence booster for all!!! This will also promote communication between students and families as they talk about their math lessons.

### Middle School/High School

**Online Baking Show-** Invite families to participate in an online Baking Show. Families would volunteer for one night a year to make a favorite family dish or meal, during this time of COVID you could make a YouTube video and share and hopefully soon you would be able to have it at your school. Ask families to participate by volunteering to make a cultural dish and film it being created.

**A Daily Ritual That Builds Trust and Community Among Students-** An activity that encourages students to open-up about a person close to them can bring a whole class together in profound ways. By Henry Seton, January 8, 2021

Illustration concept for community:

The five sentences above about my father are an example of what I call a daily dedication, a 30- to 60-second presentation delivered each day by a student or teacher. It usually occurs right after the initial do-now or warmup but before we introduce the day's objective and agenda. It takes less than five minutes total each week, but it is a prized moment in the day, one that refocuses us, fosters community, and reignites our motivation. Here is an example:

*"I dedicate our learning today to my dad. He grew up with 5 brothers and sisters. Every day he helped his mother get them ready for school and then he would take them to and from school while his mom worked long hours as a waitress. After school he worked at a local grocery store to help his mom pay the bills. After he graduated from High School, he attended a trade school become a welder. He always read to me when I was in elementary school. He was the first person in his family to go to college. My dad is one of the most humble, hard-working people I know."*