

ONE SCHOOL, ONE BOOK PROGRAM

This year has been difficult and the students are craving ways to connect as a school community, something that has been challenging due to COVID restrictions. In an effort to build community, school spirit, and have a shared experience during a time when we cannot all be together physically, our school is about to take part in a special, communitywide shared reading event! Every family will receive a copy of the same book – *Wishtree* by Katherine Applegate – and will be asked to read it together at home and/or at school over the next several weeks. Teachers will be reading chapters aloud as part of their regular learning and the school district's YouTube Channel will have recordings of most, if not all, of the chapters from staff at the elementary school. With this program, we aim to build a Community of Readers, which includes students, parents, teachers, administrative staff, etc.

The award-winning *Wishtree* by Katherine Applegate is a beautiful book about hope during very difficult times and how a community rallies together to combat racial hatred and prejudice - two timely messages given the pandemic and racial division.

Your child will receive a copy of *Wishtree* during the week of April 26. One copy per family will be distributed; the oldest child at the elementary school will receive the book. Generally, you will be asked to read about 15 minutes each night. Some of the reading will take place with teachers and chapter readings will be video recorded and posted to the school district's YouTube Channel. Read together as a family and ask your child what he/she has been reading and learning from *Wishtree*. This is a novel program in that children of several grade levels will all be listening to and reading the same book. Reading professionals recommend reading material out loud that is beyond a child's own reading level. We also believe that you can and should continue reading chapter books with your older children, even when they are able to read by themselves. We have selected a title that can be followed and understood and enjoyed by younger students, but will still captivate and stimulate older children.

Throughout the shared reading event, everyone will be talking about *Wishtree*! The committee has planned some amazing complementary thematic activities such as a **WISHTREE at Hotaling Park** where students and anyone interested can tie a fabric wish onto the evergreen - What wish do you have for our community or world? Other activities may include a Go Beyond offering, service project to collect for local refugee agencies, and filling wishes of those who make requests. The culminating event will be a virtual all school assembly the first week of June with the author in attendance!

We know that you'll enjoy this special reading time with your children. We hope to talk with both you and your student sometime in the days to come about Red's experience when a new family moves into her neighborhood. "When a whole school reads a book, there's a lot to talk about." With your help, we can build a Community of Readers at our school!

Thank you to the Voorheesville Community & School Foundation, Voorheesville PTA, Voorheesville Public Library, BSNB, New Scotland Kiwanis, and Empire Wine & Liquors whose generous support has made the **One School, One Book Program** possible.

We are excited to embark on the wondrous journey together!

Jeff Vivencio, *VES Principal*

Gail Brown, *Head of Youth & Family Services, Voorheesville Public Library,
Co-Chair of OSOB Committee*

Jennifer Grant, *Co-Chair of OSOB Committee*

