

# Peace of Mind Newsletter

September 21, 2015  
Volume 1, Issue 1

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## This Week In Peace...



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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Volume 1 of our new Peace of Mind Newsletter!

We are Linda Ryden, Peace Teacher and creator of the Peace of Mind program, and School Counselor Jillian Diesner. Linda teaches Peace Class each week to the 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders and Jillian teaches the Pre-K and Kindergarten classes.

Every two weeks we will let you know what is happening in Peace Class and in the Peace of Mind program in general. We may also share some interesting articles and some pictures of your children being peaceful.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions you have about the Peace of Mind program at [linda.ryden@dc.gov](mailto:linda.ryden@dc.gov) and [jillian.diesner@dc.gov](mailto:jillian.diesner@dc.gov).

*Linda & Jillian*

## Dates and Events

- ◆ 9/21 International Day of Peace
- ◆ 10/20 College Week
- ◆ 11/5- Peace of Mind Overview and Q&A

## Peace Club



Peace club is finally up and running! Due to space and timing limitations this year, we have started our “pop-up Peace Club” outside at recess. We wheel our cart full of games, art supplies, and fun down to the picnic area outside the Rec Center and set up shop for anyone who is interested in joining us. Ms. Mosby, Ms. Ryden, and Ms. Diesner also scour the playground looking for anyone who may not have a playmate or know what they want to do and invite them to come over. The great thing about doing Peace Club this way is that all grades 1-5 are able to join in and kids don’t have to choose between going outside or coming to Peace Club. Now, when the weather turns very cold we might need to figure out another solution, but until then...look for Pop-up Peace Club during the 11:15-12:45 recesses on the hill.

We'll soon be on the Web at:  
[www.teachpeaceofmind.com](http://www.teachpeaceofmind.com)



Like us on Facebook

## At Lafayette, we Speak, Act, and Move Mindfully

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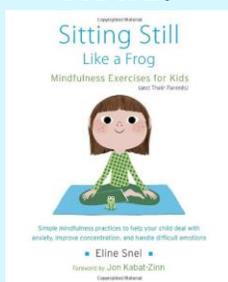
### Ask Your Child

*“Who is your  
kindness pal this  
week?”*

*“What did you and  
your pal do for  
each other?”*

*“How did you take  
on the Peace Day  
Challenge?”*

## Recommended Read:



***Sitting Still Like a Frog;  
Mindfulness Exercises  
for Kids (and Their  
Parents)***, by Eline Snel

## Pre-K and Kindergarten Peace Class News

After we dried up all the tears and settled in to a new routine in school (some for the very first time!), we started Peace Classes. First we looked in the Counselor’s Toolbox to find out what “tools” we have to help us in school. We introduced mindful listening with various different bells, and learned that “mindful” also means “careful” and “noticing.” We talked about our thoughts and feelings, drew what’s in our happy thought bubble, and named some feelings we have at school. We met some puppets who each had

different feelings and behaviors (Paco the puppy was excited, Liam the lamb was scared, and Ladybug was grouchy) and helped them all calm their bodies down. We watched Elmo learn how to belly breathe while we practiced along too (you can watch the video again [here](#)).

To wrap up our unit on feelings, we will learn the 1-5 scale for measuring the size of our feelings (1=calm and 5=too big). Try using the scale with your child, and ask them to tell you what it means!

## First - Fifth Grade Peace Class News

In all of my classes so far this year we are starting with an emphasis on mindfulness fundamentals. With my experienced mindfulness students in grades 3-5 we have been practicing a technique called “Popcorn”. To practice Popcorn you get in your Mindful Body, close your eyes, and take three deep breaths. Then you bring your attention to your breath and see if you can count your breaths. Anytime that you notice that your mind has wandered away from counting your breaths you point or “pop” your finger and then try to bring your mind back to counting your breaths again. You might have to do this over and over again in a two or three minute period. This is a great way to help you to notice where your thoughts are at any given time and it also helps you to strengthen your “focusing muscles.” The more we practice Popcorn the easier it is for us to keep our minds focused on what we are doing whether it’s doing homework, following directions, hitting a baseball, or listening to a friend. **Ask your child to teach you how to do Popcorn.**

With my younger students in grades 1-2 we are learning about mindfulness by doing things mindfully, by paying close attention to what we are doing. We are learning to breath mindfully, move mindfully, listen mindfully, and see mindfully. To practice using our senses

we use our Mindfulness Magnifying Glass. Sometimes I ask the children to think of a color, or a shape, or a letter and then walk around the room silently counting up how many times we see our color, or shape, or letter. It is lots of fun to see things in a new way and it helps us to sharpen our attention to detail and to help us to stay attentive in the present moment.

In all of my classes in grades 1-5 we have Kindness Pals. Each week children are assigned a Kindness Pal. It is their job to do nice things for that child for the whole week (get his snack, stack her chair, play together at recess, etc.) The following week we hear about what everyone did for their Pal and they get a new one. This is a very popular activity which achieves several goals. One is to remind the children to make kindness part of their daily lives. It has been scientifically proven that people who keep track of the kind things that they do tend to do more of them. Doing kind things for their own “pal” will spill over into their treatment of others. Pairing up the children also provides opportunities to get to know each other and to “find the good” in someone that you might not have gotten along with in the past or who you think you just don’t like.

We’ve had a busy first few weeks in Peace Class, and a whole lot of fun!