

Well, here we are virtual learners again, so December 2020 will look a lot different. There are only three weeks of school in December, but Mr. Malear has some fun activities planned to excite our students.

The character traits for the month are Caring and Empathy. Most children learn very early what active caring looks and feels like. Parents are children's first teachers and children learn how to care about others from their own caring adults. At VES we link caring with kindness because caring people are kind people. It sounds pretty simple but children still need to see examples in their everyday lives. Empathy is a little more difficult to teach because children are developmentally self-centered. Helping children to consider the feelings of others and treat others as they want to be treated are the most basic ways of instilling empathy.

I haven't set a schedule to visit Google classrooms with a Caring/Empathy message yet. When I do visit, the message will be that our focus on receiving gifts can be flipped to give others gifts that never break, run out of batteries, or go out of style- gifts of caring, kindness, and empathy 365 days a year not just on the Big Day.

Our Operation Christmas Joy Day of Donations was extremely successful this year. We were worried that with the limited time to donate, the proceeds would be much less. We underestimated the students and staff at VES! The grand donation total was \$1,915.55! This breaks any record we have ever had! Thank you to all who participated. Mr. and Mrs. Schwab were thrilled with the total as the need is great this year. This has been a challenging year for so many. Our hope is that the new year will bring us back together as a community with in-person learning.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your School Counselor!

