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# THE AMBERLY ADVANTAGE

*A School Community Dedicated to Providing a Nurturing and Challenging Learning Environment for All.*

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## **TIGHT FINANCIAL TIMES CAN BRING FAMILIES TOGETHER**

*Parents Can Reduce Stress This Holiday Season by Giving the Gift of Time*  
From: *loveandlogic.com*

For many American families, this holiday season will be much different than others in recent memory. The current economic slowdown likely will affect many people, from the lack of a holiday bonus or overtime pay to the loss of a job. But tight times don't mean your holidays have to be ruined.

Less spending money can encourage families to escape the materialistic view of the holidays and connect with what kids really want from their parents: Time. This is one of a child's most basic human needs.

Our studies and experience at the Love and Logic Institute reveal that kids have a strong subconscious drive to focus on possessions when they do not get their share of time and fun with parents. They try to "fill up" on stuff when they feel empty.

By applying some simple techniques, parents can help their kids fill up on relationships instead of possessions

Their view can change from "What can I get?" to "What can I give?" Here's how:

**Step One: Don't hide a tight family budget from the kids.** A wise parent does not try to protect kids from reality. This is a wonderful time for kids to see how much it costs to run a family. Kids can handle knowing what is left over at the end of the month and how much is available for entertainment and presents. And this is great preparation for adulthood.

**Step Two: Talk with your children about the precious gift of time.** Nothing heals the heart better than doing something good for someone else. We all saw this when people rushed to help others affected by the tragedies of 9-11.

During the holidays, you might ask your children: "Kids, would a box of candy be a better gift for Grandma, or do you think she would rather have you do something she can't do for herself, like raking the yard? I bet she would probably remember your doing something for her a lot longer than she would remember a box of candy." If your kids don't have the answer, have them talk to Grandma. I bet she can give them a good lesson on the value of time spent versus the value of gifts bought.

**Step Three: Set limits on the amount of money you can spend for gifts.**

At the Love and Logic Institute, we've found that people are happiest when they have choices. Set a budget and let the children choose which gift they would like to have within that budget. Set your limits and offer choices in a matter-of-fact way. Do not make apologies.

**Step Four: Help your kids make their own gift certificates and wrapping paper.**

This is great fun. It saves a lot of money and gets the kids engaged in how great it can be to work together. They will fondly remember these times for many years.

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*Thank You  
Amberly Families*



The holiday season is often a time for reflection and giving thanks. There is so much to be thankful for at Amberly Elementary School. Our staff is committed to teaching, continually learning and giving their best each and everyday to our students. Our parents/guardians are involved, supportive and present in our school. Because of you so much good is happening at Amberly Elementary: additional support for students both before and after school, wonderful enrichment programs to advance student learning, fifth grade camp, field trips, activities & presentations for students, positive, proactive communication, and a safe and welcoming school environment. *Thank you for joining hands to promote educational excellence for the students of Amberly Elementary School!*

## Toys for Tots Drive



The Amberly School Community is assisting with the annual Toys for Tots gift collection. Collection boxes can be found throughout the school. If you are interested in supporting this drive, please bring an unwrapped new toy, book, game, craft item, etc. to the school office and/or place it in a donation box.

## Thank You for Supporting Community Sharing

Amberly families showed their generosity and compassion for Portage families in need during the Community Sharing campaign. During this annual food drive, held during the week of 11/9 – 13, over 1591 food items and \$222. were collected for the Portage Community Outreach Center. Thank you to Becky and Troy Bach for overseeing this project. Additional thanks go to Sarah Bricknell, Karin Code, Marcie Compton, Vicki Georgeau and Stefanie Janowicz for the counting, carrying and delivery of donated items to PCOC.

## ♪ Fifth Grade Choir Concert ♪

Amberly Elementary will be filled with music and song on Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>! The Fifth Grade Choir students have been practicing regularly to entertain families and friends at their first concert of the school year. **The Fifth Grade Choir will present “The United As One Concert” on Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in the Amberly gym. Come and enjoy songs celebrating the beautiful winter season!**

### KSO Woodwind Quintet

Assemblies – December 11<sup>th</sup>

The Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra’s Music on the Move Show will be at Amberly Elementary School on Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. This year students will enjoy an afternoon presentation by the Woodwind Quintet. Students will learn which instruments are considered woodwinds, how these instruments make their sound and enjoy performances by the KSO Woodwind Quintet.



### Chataqua Express World Winter

Holiday Tour – December 14<sup>th</sup>

Guy Louis will be back at Amberly sharing his music and various unique musical instruments on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. The World Winter Holiday Tour is a fast-paced, fun and interactive musical adventure that celebrates the holidays while exploring cultural diversity and similarities. Holiday themes include: Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Christmas and New Year.



## Students Exchanging Gifts

As the holidays come upon us, we often have students who want to give a gift to a special friend at school. **Gift giving between students should only occur when it is part of a teacher directed and approved holiday gift exchange.**

When certain students exchange gifts with friends at school, someone is always disappointed or feels left out because they did not receive a gift and/or did not have a gift to exchange. This disappointment often becomes an issue in the classroom, lunch and/or recess environment. ***The staff of Amberly request all gifts given to a specific friend(s) are exchanged outside of the school environment.***

## Request to Stay Indoors for Recess

We believe that except on rare occasions, if a child is well enough to be in school they are well enough to go outside and enjoy recess. In addition, an adult must always be present to supervise a child staying in for recess, which takes away from staff lunch times and office staff duties. Therefore, **a note from a physician stating the child is to remain indoors for recess is required for a child to be individually supervised during recess time.** Thank you for your understanding and cooperation with this matter.

## Dress for the Weather & Label Student Outerwear!

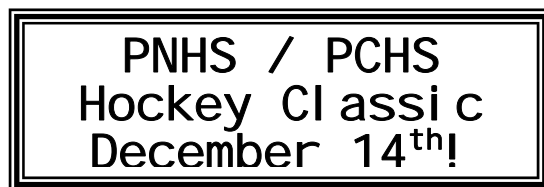
Winter weather has arrived and students need to dress for it! **Children should be wearing winter jackets, snow pants, boots, hats and gloves or mittens to school.** PLEASE WRITE STUDENT NAMES INSIDE COATS, GLOVES AND BOOTS. We have many students with look-alike clothing and a multitude of items that end up in Lost and Found. Labeling clothing will assist us in returning lost outerwear to students.

***Note: If the actual temperature (not predicted) at recess time is below zero or -15 degrees wind chill we will have indoor recess.*** Please have children come to school dressed with the anticipation of spending a thirty-minute recess outside.



## Morning Notification of School Cancellation

When Portage Public Schools cancels school due to weather conditions or other emergencies, news media is notified by 6:00 a.m. School cancellation information is also available online and via the phone. To access school cancellation information online, visit the Portage Public Schools webpage at [www.portageps.org](http://www.portageps.org), click on the “Parents & Visitors” box and then on the next page look for the school-closing link on the right hand side. This link will take you to the WWMT-TV website that posts school closings. District officials have found linking to the WWMT-TV website is the fastest method for families. ***Families may also call the Portage Public Schools “School Closing Hotline” at 323-6800*** for updates on school closure information. A message is recorded and updated at the same time news media is notified of closures. **Please note: Anytime the district cancels classes due to severe weather, all afternoon and evening activities in all Portage Public School buildings are also canceled.**



It's time again for the annual Portage Central vs. Portage Northern Hockey Classic! The big game will be held at Wing's Stadium on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. High school hockey players will be visiting elementary buildings during students' lunch hours on Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. Students will be receiving paper pucks. These pucks will get them into the game **free!** Yes...free! Adult admission is \$5.00. KOHA players wearing their jerseys get in free! Don't miss out on this awesome event! There will be many prizes to win!

## Severe Weather and Closing School During The Day

When severe weather causes school to be closed during the school day, please remember the following procedures:

- Radio stations are notified first in order to alert parents that school closing is imminent. They also carry news in the evening concerning the following school day.
- If you have access to a computer, school closing information is posted on the Portage Public Schools website at <http://www.portageps.org>. Television stations are another good source of information as they normally scroll school closing information at the bottom of the television screen.
- When school is dismissed early, secondary students are dismissed first so they are home when younger siblings arrive. *Elementary student buses do not arrive at school for a minimum of 1 to 2 hours after the initial school closing has been announced.*
- Students who walk to school may be dismissed before the buses arrive in order to allow them to arrive home prior to conditions worsening.
- Please **DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL!** We are unable to deliver last minute messages at these times of emergency dismissals. **PLEASE INSURE YOUR EARLY DISMISSAL “HEY I’M COMING HOME EARLY” FORM IS UP-TO DATE.** This form is available on the Amberly website under “Information” if you need to update it.
- *Please be certain that you review with your child where s/he is to go in case school closes on days when there is a possibility of severe weather.*

### Ski Club Begins January 6<sup>th</sup>!

It’s not too late! There’s still time to join the Amberly Ski Club! The cost is \$40.00 for bus transportation and \$14.00 for a pass. Lift tickets with the discounted pass are only \$14.00 each time you ski and rentals are at a discount as well! Ski any day, even over winter break, not just on club days! Ski Club members receive 3 free lessons; this more than pays for the bus transportation! Bus transportation for students in grades 4 & 5 is safe and well supervised with at least four parent helpers! Forms are available yet at the office! The Ski Club will go to Timber Ridge every Wednesday from January 6<sup>th</sup> to March 10<sup>th</sup> (weather permitting).

### Winter Break:

**December 21<sup>st</sup> – January 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Winter Break will begin at the end of the school day on Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>
- with students having no school from December 21<sup>st</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- School will resume on Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010.



## Do You Want To....

**Receive a Holiday Food Basket?  
Attend a Children's Holiday Party?**

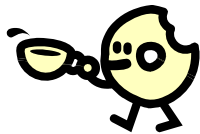
If you, or anyone you know, can benefit from receiving a Holiday Food Basket or by attending the Children's Holiday Party (ages 2 to 5<sup>th</sup> grade) please contact the Portage Community Center at 323-1942. You must live within the Portage Public School District or the City of Portage and income qualify.

You may sign up Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 325 E. Centre – corner of Currier Drive.

The deadline for Christmas Basket sign up is December 18<sup>th</sup>.

The deadline for the Children's Holiday Party sign up is December 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Donuts for Dads  
January 21<sup>st</sup>**



Dads, step dads, granddads, uncles and any other special person in a student's life are invited to Donuts for Dads on Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> from 8 to 8:35 a.m. in the Amberly Elementary School Cafeteria. Please come and enjoy a donut, coffee and/or milk with the child you serve as a positive role model for!

### The Gifts of Gratitude

*Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.  
It turns what we have into enough, and more.  
It turns denial into acceptance,  
chaos into order, confusion to clarity...  
Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings  
peace for today, and creates a vision for  
tomorrow.*

*Melody Beattie*

## Student Attendance Attendance Line: 323-5996

The Michigan Code for Public Schools states that it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to see that their children between the ages of six and sixteen be in regular attendance at school. The Portage Public Schools extends this expectation to all students, regardless of age, attending 100% of all scheduled days of instruction.

If your child is truly ill, s/he should stay home, of course. If this is the case, please contact the school attendance line (323-5996) and request homework missed for him/her so the transition back to school can be easier. **Please specify what your child is ill with (stomach flu, respiratory flu, bronchitis, etc.).** *The Kalamazoo County Department of Health requires schools to report on a weekly basis illnesses and communicable diseases students are afflicted with.*

Missing school for reasons other than illness can become a pattern you do not wish to start with your child. Studies show that children who have poor attendance in elementary school are much more likely to drop out of high school in later years. ***Please show your child how important you feel regular school attendance is by attempting to schedule doctor appointments and family vacations when school is not in session.***

### Anticipated Absences Due to Family Vacations

Regular school attendance is basic to much of the success students attain. Daily teaching, interactions of students with teachers and peers, discussions, visual displays, etc. are a crucial part of academic work. ***Parents/guardians who wish to have their child miss school for a family vacation should realize the classroom instruction students miss can not be duplicated.*** It is difficult for teachers to provide students with make-up work prior to leaving for a vacation due to the need to vary the pace and presentation of instruction to meet the needs of learners who are in attendance. It is up to the teacher's professional judgement as to whether course work can be provided in advance for the units of instruction students will miss due to vacation. Teachers will provide students with work missed upon their return from vacation and may seek to teach the child concepts missed during lunch or recess periods.



2010 After School Enrichment  
Program



Amberly is proud to offer our 2010 After School Enrichment Program! This year we are hosting 17 amazing classes! After School Enrichment provides Amberly students with the opportunity to try fun extra curricular classes in a variety of different subjects, taught by qualified instructors.

Classes begin Jan 11, 2010 and continue through the week of February 15. Please see the course descriptions sent home in Friday Folders for length, and day of specific classes. Some classes may only be 3 weeks in length, while some may continue all 6 weeks. All classes meet immediately after school and end at 4:45pm.

This year, ASE will conclude with a Talent Show, a Children’s Theatre Production and the Achievement Expo during the week of March 1<sup>st</sup>. Many classes offered will be preparing the students for these upcoming events. Sign up begins immediately and ends on Jan 7, 2010. Class sizes are limited, so sign up now! Classes will be filled on a first come first served basis. You may participate in as many classes as you wish.



**Who Should You Contact?**



The best source of information is always the adult who initially provided the information and/or is closest to the situation. In most cases the teacher will be the best person to respond to questions. Questions regarding student progress, assignments, tests, or class related information should be directed to the teacher responsible for the class. If parents/guardians have special situations they need to discuss, but are unsure of whom to contact, the classroom teacher is also a good starting point. Research shows students whose parents and teachers have good communication and a strong partnership have better attitudes and perform better in school. We hope to establish strong positive relationships with families to support student success!

*Please remember to utilize the communication note pads - red “Note To Amberly Elementary School” to assist in communication. These parent notes are easy for staff to identify and respond to in a timely manner.*



**EXITING THE SCHOOL BUILDING  
AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY**



*Parents/guardians bringing and picking up students from school are to drop off or pick up students at designated parking areas and/or in the main lobby. To insure appropriate supervision, STUDENTS WILL BE EXITING THE BUILDING FROM THE FRONT ENTRANCES AND/OR THE SOUTH PARKING LOT ENTRANCE ONLY! Students ARE NOT to exit from doors adjoining the playground area (primary & third grade hallway, cafeteria hallway or art/music hallway doors). ***If you are meeting your child after school, please do so at the main lobby or either of the parking lot side walks (front or south parking lot).****