

Desert Sky Middle School

December 2020

Letter from the Principal

Dear Desert Sky Parents and Families,

The Holiday Season is upon us. Between school, family time, work, and the holidays, it can be tough to just catch your breath. I want to take this time to express my gratitude to the loving families of Desert Sky. We are grateful that you share your children and lives with us.

Thank you to all of the families and staff who contributed to the 2020 NJHS Canned Food Drive. Your donations provide hundreds of food baskets for families in the Vail community during the holidays. The results of this year's drive were spectacular with 1,694 food items and \$137 in cash and gift cards donated.

The season of giving continues... trying to find the perfect gift for our children can be exciting or even stressful as we search online for the best deal on the *most in* new gadgets, clothes, or gift cards. In a few months or years, the gifts will likely make their way to the junk or donation pile. This year, I hope you can find the time to share a gift that lasts a lifetime – making memories. A few ideas that even middle schoolers could get in to are baking, cooking, playing board games, or simply taking a stroll through the park so you can catch up on *life*. One-on-one time can be the most valuable gift you and your child share this season.

On behalf of Desert Sky Middle School, I would like to wish you and your loved ones a safe, healthy, and joyful holiday season.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Marsh
Principal
520-879-2704
marshr@vailschooldistrict.org

Upcoming Events

December

- 9 ELA Benchmark #2
- 10 Math Benchmark #2
- 11 Benchmark Make-ups
- 14-18 Holiday Spirit Week
- 18 Report Cards Mailed Home
- 18 Winter Break Begins - School Resumes 1/4/21

January

- 4 School Resumes
- 11-15 GRIT Spirit Week
- 18 No School – Martin Luther King Jr. Day



Daily Home Health Screening Checklist

PTO News

Hello Cougar Families!

We hope you are enjoying a happy and healthy holiday season! The PTO has been busy in the background - helping Mrs. Talley, DSMS' amazing Volunteer Coordinator, to give all the staff some notes of gratitude and appreciation, along with a sweet treat, before the Thanksgiving break. We will be helping Mrs. Talley with Sweets and Treats in December, so keep your eyes open for that email.

We need you!! We are in need of 2 Executive Board Members. Keep in mind that we do not host major school events as the various clubs, teams, and student groups on campus do that. The PTO helps out with these events financially, we plan staff appreciation, review grant requests from staff to make sure both staff and student needs are met, and organize a couple fundraisers a year to enable us to give back as much as possible to the school. If you have any interest or any questions, please email us.

Green Things Nursery Poinsettia Fundraiser: Thank you to everyone who pre-ordered their poinsettias! They are gorgeous!! You can get yours anytime between now and Christmas, and up to 35% of the purchase price of these beautiful plants will come back to the DSMS PTO. Take a printed or electronic copy of the coupon below to Green Things Nursery to pick out your beautiful poinsettias. You must present the coupon for us to get credit. For more information on prices and location, go to our landing page on their website: <https://greenthingsaz.com/desert-sky-middle-school>
Thank you for your support!

Our next virtual meeting is Wednesday, 16 December, at 4:30 pm. Please check our Facebook page for the link, or if you aren't on FB, feel free to email us at desertskypto@gmail.com.

Happy Holidays!

Your PTO Executive Board,

Vicki Williams-Potter
Roxana Samaniego
Kristi Mooney
Patti House

From the Desk of the Volunteer Coordinator

A huge THANK YOU to the Desert Sky PTO and STUCO for helping make our "Revised Friendsgiving" a success! We were able to pass out Starbucks coffees and donuts (from Young Donut) the Tuesday before our Thanksgiving Break. The teachers and staff were surprised and truly appreciated the treats. Again, THANK YOU to STUCO and the DSMS PTO!

The PTO is always looking for members and it is so easy to become one! Please scan the attached code and get started. And, we are also looking for new board members. Middle school PTO is much different than the elementary PTO's, PTA's, and PTSA's. And, Desert Sky is always looking for volunteers Please let me know if you have questions about either. I would love to talk with you!

I hope you and your family have a safe and Happy Holidays!

Angel Tree Information

National Junior Honor Society - Canned Food Drive

The members of the National Junior Honor Society would like to thank the Desert Sky community for their tremendous generosity during our annual canned food drive. This year the drive was more important than ever, and our Cougars did not disappoint! We collected 1740 food items and \$137 in cash and gift cards. All donations will benefit families in the Vail community during the holiday season.

Holiday Spirit Week

Student Recognition Corner

Peyton Mercer (Team D): Peyton is a super star on Team D! She participates in every conference, and she always puts 110% into every assignment. She is fantastic about asking for help when she needs it, and participates in discussions by asking thoughtful follow up questions. She is an amazing student, and she is also a very involved member of Desert Sky's National Junior Honor Society. On top of all that, she is just a genuinely nice person:) We are proud to be her teachers!

Madison Iliff (Team A): Team A would like to recognize Madison Iliff for the month of December. Although she works from home, Madison has taken every opportunity to be a strong part of the classroom. Not only have her grades remained at the highest level, but Maddie is always present, on-time with her camera on and engaged in the work--all while eating a snack or her lunch. We appreciate and admire how Madison has taken on the added responsibility of remote learning while never missing a beat. Keep it up, Maddie!

Clarissa Toala (Team B): Team B is happy to recognize Clarissa Toala. This young lady is always in class, ready to work and eager to learn. She asks questions, double checks her answers, and is always motivated to do her best. We love having her in our classes, and are all proud of the excellent grades she is earning. Keep it up, Clarissa! We're so proud of you.

Naima Barbuzon (Team C): Team C is happy to recognize Naima Barbuzon as December's Student Of The Month. Naima works so very hard to maintain excellent grades in all her classes. She is a constant in our conferences, always adding to class discussions and asking clarifying questions when she needs help understanding. Aside from being an excellent student, Naima is an amazing person, she sends wonderful messages to her teachers thanking us for our help and checking on us when we have root canals :). We are all so very lucky to have her on our team, Naima is what all students should aspire to be...a true Desert Sky Cougar.

Brett Williams (Jeffries/James): Mrs. Jeffries and Mr. James would like to recognize Brett Williams as our team's student of the month. Brett is a smart and hardworking student and we are so proud of all his efforts so far this quarter. When remote/online learning began, Brett struggled a bit with working with Schoology. Brett has since been a role model student, asking questions when needed, coming in for tutoring help, and going above and beyond in all his work, actively looking for support when needed. Brett is respectful to his teachers and classmates and has shown true DSMS GRIT and we are so very proud of all his hard work and know he will continue to be successful!

Brooke Byars (Smith-Dryden/Thorpe): The Thorpe/Smith-Dryden team would like to recognize Brooke Byars. Brooke is an amazing student who always brings positive energy to any situation. Whether online or in class, she is ready to participate and puts maximum effort into whatever she's doing. She works hard to do well and is ready to help however she can. She is a great team player who works to include everyone. She's ready to lead and celebrates others doing well.

Kaydence Cox (Team E): Let's be honest; the current hybrid model of instruction is challenging. It is unlike anything we have tried prior to the pandemic (Grrr! COVID...). There are a number of issues or obstacles preventing students from achieving at the highest level. However, Kaydence is doing a phenomenal job right now! She is completing all of her work to the best of her ability, asking questions when she needs clarification, and finding ways to overcome those daily challenges. She is a delight to have on campus and an intelligent young lady, to boot! We are excited to have her as part of Team E this year

and we know she will continue to do great things going forward. Keep up the amazing work, Kaydence!

Ashley Kristek (Hill/Willard/Crabtree/Chen): During this unusual and challenging year, many things have changed considerably and left us with unique obstacles to overcome. Now, more than ever, we are inspired and awed by the Cougar spirit that Ashley Kristek has shown. Ashley has taken on the normal pitfalls of starting middle school (such as the higher academic rigor and a new class routine to get used to) as well as all of the additional COVID learning challenges without breaking a sweat! She calmly seeks out ways to improve her understanding of the material and help others excel along with her. She never misses an opportunity to offer an encouraging word with classmates, check in on her family (and teachers), and share her beautiful smile and positive outlook with everyone who has the good fortune to be in her company. Ashley is a true inspiration and we greatly appreciate her! Way to go, Ashley! We can't wait to see what else you accomplish this year!

DSMS Spirit Masks

We hope you have enjoyed the December issue of the Cougar Call. Please be on the lookout for further issues in the upcoming months.

Sincerely,

DSMS News Crew

DSMS Contacts

Front Office Numbers

Principal

Rebecca Marsh
879-2704

Assistant Principal

Lisa Scott
879-2715

Front Office

879-2702

Attendance

879-2702

Site Council

Natascha Blum - Parent
Erin Dunbar - Parent
Brian Goodall - Parent
Meridy Twilling - Parent
Sheri Aken - Certified Staff
Kristi Hill - Certified Staff
Karleene Talley - Classified Staff

PTO Board

Vicki Williams-Potter
Roxana Samiengo
Kristi Mooney
Patti House

Quick Links

[DSMS Website](#)

[2020-2021 Calendar](#)

[Vail School District](#)

[PowerSchool](#)

[Tax Credits](#)

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