

# CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter from the Somerville Public Schools – December 23, 2020

## News & Notes

### Two Remarkable Volunteers Making Sure Students Get Winter Clothing they Need

We have a lot of wonderful volunteers at Somerville Public Schools, but we want to acknowledge two long-term Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) volunteers who have been key to supporting Somerville students and children in need. Maren Chiu and Marcie Campbell are crucial to the coordination of the SFLC Winter Clothing Drive for the SFLC, the Family Engagement Department of the Somerville Public Schools. For safety reasons, this work needs to be done with limited exposure between volunteers and staff. This means that every donation for the Winter Clothing Drive goes through Maren and Marcie. SFLC's Basic Needs and Homeless Services Liaison, Francia Reyes coordinates requests from students and families and organizes deliveries in collaboration with the larger SFLC team. Sometimes students need clothing for outdoor work, sometimes students need clothing so they can run family errands, and sometimes it's simply clothing to keep children safe in colder temperatures. Maren and Marcie take a personalized approach to their requests, asking for specific sizes and about the children's specific needs. They order new items online, they take home and wash second-hand items for students, they visit stores to purchase urgently needed items, and they package each item for distribution to recipients. They have prepared and packaged over 70 high-quality clothing donations for babies to high school students. In the words of Francia Reyes, "if someone asks for something that we don't have, they go and buy it. They are amazing."

Marcie and Maren are currently working on a list of over 120 requests for clothing for Somerville children and youth. If you would like to donate to one of the Winter Clothing Wish Lists, please visit <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/sflc> for links.



## SHS Students Earn Highlander of the Quarter Awards

Fifty-three Somerville High School students are being recognized for strongly exemplifying one or more of the Highlander Habits throughout the first quarter. These habits include Growth Mindset, Physical & Emotional Wellness, Communication, Collaboration, Critical & Creative Thinking, Culturally Competent Citizenship, Professionalism and Post-Secondary Readiness. Congratulations to the [first quarter Winners and Honorable Mentions!](#)

# What's Happening

## Winter Break Meal Distribution Schedule

Winter break is upon us and we want to assure families that Grab-and-Go breakfast and lunch meals will be available during the December 24<sup>th</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup> Winter Break period on a revised distribution schedule. No meals will be distributed on Thursday or Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>, however families can pick up meals on **Monday, December 28th and Wednesday, December 30th from 9am-11am** at the East Somerville Community, Healey School, Winter Hill Community Innovation School and the West Somerville Neighborhood School. Families are welcome to take as many meals as needed to cover them until we resume our regular meal distribution schedule starting Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>.

## P-EBT Benefits Extended through the end of the 2020-21 School Year

The Pandemic – Electronic Transfer (P-EBT) Program created spring 2020 to provide eligible families funds to purchase food while schools were closed during the Covid-19 pandemic has been extended through the end of the 2020-21 school year. Please see below for key details, and visit <https://www.map-ebt.org/home/#ihtab> for additional information.

- The federal government has extended P-EBT benefits through the entire 2020-21 school year.
- More P-EBT funds are coming starting at the end of December for eligible families.
- Funds will come in one issuance for October and November school days.
- Eligible students in remote learning situations will receive \$117.20 per month.
- Using P-EBT does NOT impact you or your students' immigration status. The public charge rule does NOT apply to P-EBT funds.
- If you have lost or misplaced your card, visit here: <https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/pebt>
- To update the Department of Transitional Assistance on an address change, please call the DTA Assistance Line at 877-382-2363.
- If you don't have the letter with your child's case number on it in order to activate your card, visit here: <https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/PEBT>

## January Somerville SEPAC Meeting and Workshop – Save the Date!

**Tuesday, January 12th from 6:00-6:45 pm:** Somerville Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SSEPAC) business meeting. All are welcome. For the Zoom link and more information, please e-mail: [somervilleparentstogether@gmail.com](mailto:somervilleparentstogether@gmail.com)

**Tuesday, January 12th from 7-8pm:** Somerville Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SSEPAC) hosts Linda K. Murphy for a presentation about her new book, "Declarative Language Handbook: Using a Thoughtful Language Style to Help Kids with Social Learning Challenges Feel Competent, Connected, and Understood". For the Zoom link, please e-mail: [somervilleparentstogether@gmail.com](mailto:somervilleparentstogether@gmail.com)

### *About the presentation:*

Each time we speak, we have the opportunity to choose our words. Speaking in a mindful way can mean that we are purposefully choosing words that will invite and empower children to think critically. When we pause to think about what we say and how we say it, kids in turn stop to think about what they say or do in response. In this presentation, participants will be given an overview of The Declarative Language Handbook along with some takeaways to try at

home. Declarative language is a speaking style that can be naturally used within social interactions to encourage connection and learning across areas of perspective taking, flexible thinking, problem solving and experience sharing.

### **About Linda Murphy:**

Linda Murphy MS, CCC-SLP is a speech language pathologist and RDI® Consultant working at her private practice, Peer Projects Therapy From the Heart, in Beverly, MA. Linda has a special interest in social learning differences and uses writing to share information near and dear to her heart on this topic. She is the author of Declarative Language Handbook, and co-authored Social Thinking and Me with Michelle Garcia Winner. Her goal is to help adults understand the mindset of struggling learners so that they can communicate with patience, create meaningful exchanges, and help the child feel competent, calm and confident.

## **Community News**

**2021 Martin Luther King, Jr. Event.** The Somerville Human Rights Commission is seeking student submissions for this year's pre-recorded Martin Luther King, Jr. event. This year's event will not include the traditional student essay contest held in previous years, but rather students who are interested in participating are invited to submit essays, video narratives, spoken word, or other creative formats. Pre-recorded submissions are **due no later than January 8<sup>th</sup>** to be included in the pre-recorded event, which will air on MLK Jr. Day - January 18, 2021. Submissions should be emailed to Nancy Salamoun at [nsalamoun@somervillema.gov](mailto:nsalamoun@somervillema.gov). Student submissions can be between 1-3 minutes long and should address one of the following questions.

1. If you have participated in recent demonstrations or actions, in what ways has your experience of a social movement led you to identify with the example of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?
2. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday is two days before the inauguration of a new President. What advice do you think Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would give to our new President and Americans as a whole about the issues we currently face in today's world?
3. Looking at a piece of Dr. King's work, (example "Letter from A Birmingham Jail"), what connections can be made? What was Dr. King's call to action in that piece and how might one listen to that call today?

## **Just for Fun**

Enjoy a musical interlude this winter break through [El Sistema Somerville's Virtual Winter Concert](#). For more great #JustforFun activities, visit: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/justforfun>.

## **City & District Employment Opportunities**

Consider joining a winning team! Current city and district opportunities include:

- [Deputy Director of Libraries](#), Libraries, City of Somerville
- [Housing Programs Coordinator](#), OSPCD-Housing, City of Somerville
- [Charter Review Project Manager](#), Mayor's Office, City of Somerville

Visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/jobs> for a complete listing of current open positions in the City of Somerville.

- [Multilingual Learner Education Program Coordinator](#), Somerville Public Schools
- [Student Insights Lead Product Engineer](#), Somerville Public Schools
- [Temporary Unidos Kindergarten Paraprofessional](#), East Somerville Community School, Somerville Public Schools

Visit <https://www.schoolspring.com/jobs/?employer=16902> for a complete listing of current open positions in the Somerville Public Schools.

### **Our Commitment to the Whole Child**

VISION: "We believe in developing the whole child — the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of all students — by providing students with the skills, opportunities, and resources that will nurture innovative ideas, foster pride in diversity, inspire students to become lifelong learners and empower them to enrich their communities."