

HAUPPAUGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Pines Elementary

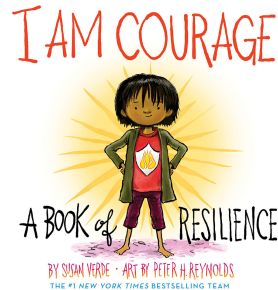
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DR. CLAUDINE DiMUZIO

Principal



“What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?” *Vincent Van Gogh*

October 2023

Dear Pines Students, Staff, and Families,

Happy Fall!

Now that we have routines underway, we can start to get into the deeper work that we are able to do as a school community. October is when all five schools start age-appropriate lessons and schoolwork based on the Choose Love component titled, “Courage.” Choose Love defines courage as *the willingness and ability to work through obstacles despite feeling embarrassment, fear, reluctance, or uncertainty.*

Over the past weekend I had the pleasure of visiting a virtual exhibit titled *Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience*, where Vincent Van Gogh's art was displayed in an immersive, multimedia museum. As someone who has always been a fan of artists, I was particularly struck by the quotes attributed to Van Gogh during his lifetime that spoke directly about courage, success, and failure in ways that felt inspiring.

Throughout my years at Pines ES, I have had the opportunity to interact with many staff members, students, and family members. I have come to understand through these experiences that courage is something each and every one of us needs in our lives to move forward for creating the life of our dreams. Whether it's raising a family, pursuing a career, or going through a challenging transition, I know how hard our community works to muster courage in their lives, especially through the moments when it's needed the most.

Van Gogh's decision to follow his true passion as an artist against so many of the obstacles in his life is an important lesson for our young people, who are often facing uncertainties in their own lives or deterred because of a lack of experience. Van Gogh exemplifies the example that with enough drive and passion, if you set your mind on a certain goal, you can achieve it.

I am sharing this simple, yet powerful picture book, [*I am Courage, A Book of Resilience*](#), by Susan Verde and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds, with our school community to share this story as a reminder that courage comes in numerous shapes and forms and is the starting place for so many of our important life lessons. Whether it's asking a new classmate to join us in spending some time together, having the courage to ask for support when working through a struggle, or showing kindness to someone in ways that are new for us, courage is at the heart of these actions. It's also a precursor to moving forward in ways that we believe will make our lives more meaningful as well as more joyful.

How does this connect with Vincent Van Gogh, you may be asking? Great question! As I have been walking around and visiting classrooms, I have observed that each and every grade level math workbook has a different Vincent Van Gogh painting on its cover. As a struggling artist who worked hard to follow his true passion, Van Gogh exemplifies that if you set your mind on a certain goal, you can achieve it. What an inspiring message for all of our students to remember as they open up their math workbooks and see his artwork!! Especially since math is a subject that may take courage to learn as students delve into the unknown and learn new mathematical concepts.

Let us all remember the many people before us and amongst us who have exemplified courage in the face of the unknown and who continue to use their courage as motivation, as well as a guidepost for moving closer to their own dreams. We look forward to **Red Ribbon Week** this month, as well as teaching students throughout our school our **Choose Love** component of courage and the many ways we can use courage to lead brave and caring lives.

With courage and kindness,

Dr. DiMuzio

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Principal

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