



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

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Information Only

TO: All Principals

FROM: Janis Andrews, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer *J.A.*

SUBJECT: NATIONAL HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK
NOVEMBER 10-18, 2012

The Homeless Education Assistance Resource Team (HEART) of the Department of Student Intervention Services ensures the rights of homeless students under the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act by providing educational, advocacy, and social services to homeless students throughout the District. In an effort to bring greater awareness and sensitivity to the homeless, HEART is partnering with the Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County to provide the schools and students of our District several opportunities for involvement during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

The Homeless Coalition will be offering interactive Faces of Homelessness presentations for all grade levels by trained program representatives and volunteers. Presentations for grades K-2 and 3-5 will include reading *Mango's Quest* and *Mommy, Are We Homeless?* respectively, followed by an extension activity and discussion.

Middle school presentations will feature the reading and follow up discussion of the poem "Longing for Home" from a book of homeless themed poems entitled, *Soul Moon Soup*. Presenters will also share information on homelessness, as well as national and local statistics. Time permitting, a trained speaker who has been or currently is homeless will share his/her story.

High school classrooms will have the opportunity to participate in an interactive discussion facilitated by the Coordinator of the Faces of Homelessness Initiative. Students will be asked to share their perception of the homeless and the issue of homelessness. Homeless myths, misconceptions, and stereotypes will be explored, and local and national statistics and information will be shared. Time permitting, a trained speaker who has been, or currently is, homeless will share a personal story.

Classrooms that decide to host a collection drive as a follow up to their Faces of Homelessness experience, will receive wristbands bearing the slogan, "Ending homelessness starts with me," as a token of appreciation from the Homeless Coalition. Collection drives will include cash donations, gift cards, unused toiletries, socks, and shoes.

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The Homeless Coalition is sponsoring an art contest open to students from classrooms who participated in one of the Faces of Homelessness presentations mentioned above. The goal of the contest is to give students a vehicle which illustrates their new awareness and interest in ending homelessness in Palm Beach County. An informational flyer and contest rules will be available to participating classroom teachers on the day of their Faces of Homelessness presentation.

This year, HEART staff will extend Homelessness Awareness activities into the second semester. Planned activities will include a Public Service Announcement contest, District-wide book studies for students, parents, and staff and school-based personnel training by HEART case managers.

Should you need assistance with a homeless student at your school, or have questions regarding the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act, please contact the HEART Case Manager for your area (see attachment).

EWG/JA/JL/EVA/BAL:dh

Attachment: HEART Contact List

Approved: _____



E. Wayne Gent, Superintendent



Homeless Education Assistance Resource Team

<http://www.palmbeachschools.org/sis/heart>

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