



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 4, 2022

Malibu Middle School Hosts Teamwork and Friendship-building Retreat for Eighth Graders

“I learned that I will always have a helping hand around me” and “teamwork and communication go a long way” were just some of the things that eighth graders of Malibu Middle School (MMS) said after participating in “Eighth Grade Dialogue.” Funded by The Shark Fund and MMS’s Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), Eighth Grade Dialogue is a day filled with experiences and activities that promote teamwork, listening and friendship.

“Dialogue builds self-discovery, team growth and leadership amongst the eighth-grade class,” said MMS counselor, Lorene Whitehouse. “Our hope is that after the retreat students will walk away with a greater understanding of themselves and others.”



Malibu Middle School eighth graders participating in Dialogue activities

According to Whitehouse, students spent the morning physically reaching for their goals by creating and using human chains of support. They worked together to develop creative strategies to unwind from human knots and used their growth mindsets to play the Birthday Game. Students enjoyed pizza and games in the Chill room during lunch, followed by an afternoon of standing in others’ shoes by playing High Card Low Card and All My People.

“Communicating, helping each other and empathizing with peers created a Dialogue day to remember,” Whitehouse said.



Whitehouse, along with colleagues, MMS English Department Chair, Katy Lapajne and Social Studies teacher, JuliaCheri Hoos, as well as the Boys and Girls Club of Malibu took the lead to bring 8th Grade Dialogue back after a several year hiatus due to COVID-19.

“Dialogue did not occur during COVID-19 because it was just not possible to give students the full Dialogue retreat experience they deserved on Zoom,” said Whitehouse. “That’s why we are so happy to bring it back this year.”

In order to make Dialogue as effective as possible MMS brought on Fulcrum Learning Systems, an experiential team building company. They guided students through group activities, building character around respect, courage, honesty, leadership and teamwork.

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“It was all around a great day for our eighth graders and I look forward to doing it again next year,” said Whitehouse.

If you would like to donate to The Shark Fund, please visit: <https://www.smmusd.org/sharkfund>

If you would like to join MMS’s PTSA please visit: <https://www.smmusd.org/Page/1257>



Written by Diana Bouchaaya, Communications Specialist

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