

Cougar Connect

November 8, 2024

A Note From Mrs. McDonald



A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Dear Families,

We want to extend a big THANK YOU to our PTO for coordinating and executing a beautiful Veterans Day assembly. The veterans and visitors who attended today's assembly expressed how impressed and thankful they were to be honored in such a special way.

I hope each of you enjoys this fall weekend!

Kindly,
Erica McDonald
Principal

Newsletter Table of Contents



Newsletter Table of Contents

Recurring News:

- Save-the-Date
- ✨DEI Spotlight ✨
- Community Celebrations and Observances
- Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) News

Recent News:

- Attendance Matters: Scheduling Appointments to Keep Learning

on Track

- Civility Policy

Repeat News:

- Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day | November 14, 2024
- Teacher Collaboration Days
- Nut-Safer Guidelines
- Helpful Links (i.e., Kindergarten Tidbits, School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)

Save-the-Date



Save-the-Date

November

Monday, November 11: Support-A-Cougar Holiday Drive Begins

Wednesday, November 13: PTO Community Service

Thursday, November 14: Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day

Thursday, November 14: Fourth Grade Field Trip (Mohatt and

Franey) | BV Wilderness Science Center

Thursday, November 14: Third Grade Music Program; Dress Rehearsal 2:30 PM; Performance 6:00 PM (OTE Gym)

Friday, November 15: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00-10:30 AM

Friday, November 15: Fourth Grade Field Trip (Voge and Heston) | BV Wilderness Science Center

Friday, November 15: PTO Bingo for Books

Monday, November 18: Hearing and Vision Screening

Monday, November 18-Friday, November 22: American Education Week

Monday, November 25-Friday, November 29: Thanksgiving Break

The PTO is already in full swing for the year ahead. Follow these simple steps to ensure you don't miss any of the fun!

otepto.org

DEI Spotlight

☆☆ DEI Spotlight ☆☆

"Ruby Bridges has always been civil rights advocate, with her experience as the first Black child to enter an all-white school in the south making her a household name. Though her experience in school was harrowing due to blatant racism and the targeting of her family, Bridges never once missed a day.

Through the Ruby Bridges Foundation, speaking engagements, and writing children's books, Bridges continues to strive for an end to racism. Please join OTE in Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day. You can read the additional details about this honorable event below."

Source: [National Women's History Museum](https://www.nwhm.org/)

Are you interested in joining OTE's DEI Council? If so, please submit your contact information here: [DEI Council](#) | [Family Interest](#).



Community Celebrations and Observances

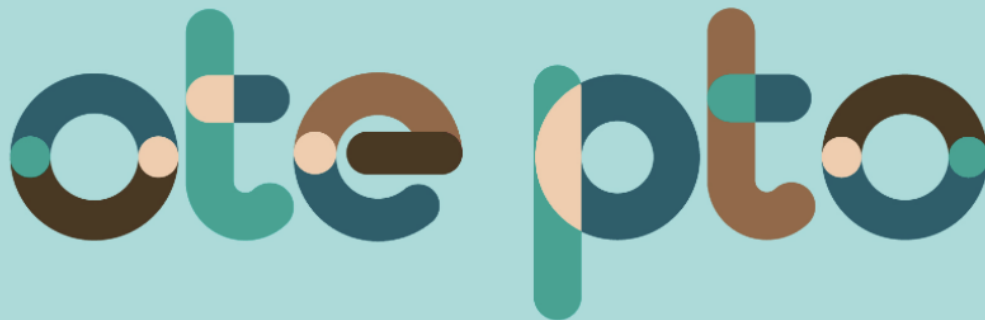


Community Celebrations and Observances - to promote awareness and appreciation of our Blue Valley families.

Some November Celebrations & Observances:

- **Native American Heritage Month** - celebrates the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, histories, and ongoing contributions of Indigenous peoples.
- **Military Family Appreciation Month** - honors the military family by recognizing their sacrifices and commitments.
- **Day of the Dead** - November 1 - celebrated by some with Mexican heritage, a joyful time to remember and honor deceased loved ones.
- **All Saints Day** - November 1 - celebrated by some of the Christian faith, this solemn, holy day honors the saints of the church.
- **Diwali** - November 12-16 - the festival of lights celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and the human ability to overcome observed by some Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, and others. Some will decorate their homes with lights and rangoli art, exchange gifts, dress in colorful clothing, feast with family, and/or go to temple.

OTE | PTO



PTO Events | November

Turn Halloween Treats into Holiday Sweets!

For our November Community Service project, OTE PTO is collecting unopened Halloween candy through Tuesday, November 12th. Drop off donations in the collection bins located in the front hallway. Then, join us on November 13th at 3:45 p.m. in the Art Room to assemble treat bags that will be included in winter break food packages for L3: Love, Literacy, Life, a local nonprofit.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Date: Wednesday, November 13
Time: 3:45PM- 4:30PM
Location: OTE ART ROOM



Parents are encouraged to attend with their student(s). Be sure to update Pick-up Patrol if you'll be staying. Please RSVP for the event—we look forward to giving back together!

[RSVP for November Community Service](#)

BINGO for Books | Friday, November 15

Join us for an evening of fun, BINGO, and book prizes at this **FREE** family event **this Friday, November 15**. We hope to see you there!



- **Register:** If you plan on attending, please [register for the event on the PTO Website](#). This will help us prepare enough materials and ensure everyone has a seat.
- **Donate Books:** PTO will also be collecting new or gently used books for this event. If you have books you would like to donate, please put them in the donation bins in the front hall by Wednesday, November 13.
- **Volunteer:** We're looking for a few volunteers to help set up and assist during the event. We need two people for setup and 2-3 volunteers to help with activities and prizes throughout the evening. [BINGO FOR BOOKS VOLUNTEER SIGN UP](#)

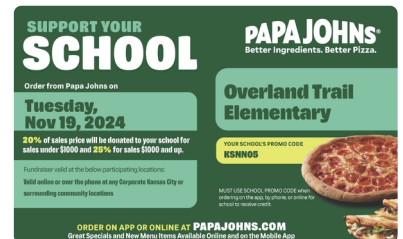
Hearing and Vision Screening | Monday, November 18

Nurse Jenn is looking for volunteers to help support students' hearing and vision screenings on Monday, November 18. Please click the link below if you are interested in supporting this essential day.

[HEARING AND VISION SCREENING VOLUNTEER SIGN UP](#)

Papa John's Restaurant Night | Tuesday, November 19

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, November 19, 2024! Order from Papa John's and support Overland Trail Elementary with every delicious slice. Use our school's promo code **KSNN05** when ordering online, on the app, or by phone, and a portion of the sales will be donated to our school.



This fundraiser is valid at any corporate Papa John's location in Kansas City and surrounding community locations. Enjoy a night off from cooking while giving back to our school community!

Celebrate Our Amazing Teachers & Staff During American Education Week!

This American Education Week, join us in showing our appreciation for the dedicated teachers and staff who go above and beyond for our students every day. We're hosting a special Staff Appreciation BBQ on **November 22**, and we'd love your support! The PTO will provide smoked meat and beans, but we need your help to complete the meal with sides, desserts, and drinks.



[Here's how you can contribute:](#)

- **Sign Up to Bring Food:** Whether homemade or store-bought, your dish will help us serve up a fantastic meal that celebrates our hardworking educators. [SIGN UP FORM.](#)
- **Make a Donation:** If you're unable to provide food, a financial donation is a wonderful way to contribute. Every dollar goes toward making this event an unforgettable experience for our teachers and staff. [DONATE.](#)

Your support, big or small, makes a difference. Let's show our gratitude and make American Education Week extra special for those who enrich our school community!

Holiday SUPPORT A COUGAR

Our holiday Support-A-Cougar drive is back! The Support-A-Cougar program partners with OTE administration to support students in need throughout the year. Our annual holiday drive allows us to provide OTE families with gift cards, new games and books during the holiday season. We need your help to make this possible!

****WAYS TO DONATE****
11/18- 12/6

- *Bring new games and books to school and place in the collection bins
- *Donate through the PTO Site via the QR code
Log-In and select your donation level
- *Send cash or check in an envelope marked "Support-a-Cougar" and have your student give to their teacher

The Support-a-Cougar Committee will work with our school counselor and social worker to purchase gift cards and distribute the donations to families in our OTE community. If you are an OTE family in need of support for the holidays, please contact the OTE Social Worker, Lacey Koester - lkoester@bluevalleyk12.org



DEADLINE TO DONATE

12/6/24



QUESTIONS? SUPPORT-A-COUGAR CHAIRS:
Tara Adams - tara.adams6@gmail.com
Sarah Cullor - sarah@cullor.com

Support a Cougar Holiday Drive – Spread Joy This Season!

Support a Cougar is a PTO-led program that helps OTE Cougars in need throughout the year, and our annual Holiday Drive is a special way to make the season brighter for families in our community. Through your generosity, we provide gifts and financial support during the holidays with donations of Target gift cards, new books, and games.



Here's how you can help:

- **Financial Contributions** – Choose a donation level and submit your payment directly on our website. [Donate by clicking here.](#)

- **New Books and Games** – Drop off your donations in the collection bins at OTE starting November 18th.

Donation deadline is December 6th. Thank you for helping us make the holidays a little brighter for our OTE community.

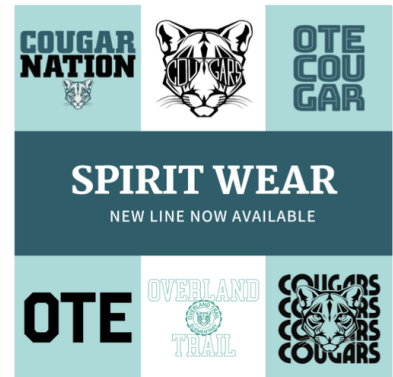
If you are an OTE family in need of support this holiday season, please reach out to the OTE Social Worker, Lacey Koester - lkoester@bluevalleyk12.org

New Spirit Wear Line Now Available!

We're excited to announce the launch of our brand-new Spirit Wear line, and trust us—you're going to love it! With multiple designs, products, and price points to choose from, you can show off your school pride in style! Best of all, the store is 100% online and open 24/7, so you can browse and shop whenever it's convenient for you. Orders will ship directly to your house. Visit the store, grab your gear, and get ready to rock that school spirit from head to toe.

Happy shopping!

[Spirit Wear Online Store](#)



Upload your pictures for the Yearbook!

Your picture uploads throughout the year make the yearbook extra special. Please use the link below to upload pictures from school events, class parties, extracurricular activities, etc. Be sure to choose a folder for your pictures to help us keep them organized. Only the PTO will be able to see and access the photos you share.

[Click here to upload pictures from the Carnival and other events!](#)



PTO Calendar of Events

For a complete list of all upcoming PTO events, visit [Overland Trail Elementary PTO - Upcoming Events \(otepto.org\)](http://Overland Trail Elementary PTO - Upcoming Events (otepto.org)).

Attendance Matters: Scheduling Appointments to Keep Learning on Track

Attendance Matters: Scheduling Appointments to Keep Learning on Track

We understand that sometimes medical appointments during the school day are unavoidable. When possible, try to schedule these appointments outside of school hours to minimize disruption to your child's learning. Missing even a small portion of the school day can make it challenging for students to stay caught up, especially as lessons build on each other.

If your child must miss school for an appointment, be sure to notify the teacher in advance. We are prepared to support students returning from short absences with extra materials or makeup work, but we know that nothing replaces the in-class experience.

Civility Policy

Civility Policy

We are thankful for the ongoing partnership and support we experience in our school community. Working together we ensure the best possible student experience allowing them to realize personal success. There are times, however, when issues arise which require our continued collaboration to resolve. Families may utilize the matrix linked on [the district website](#) to best address questions and concerns that may arise throughout the course of a school year. Finally, all staff and visitors should conduct their business free from intimidation, harassment, or bullying. The district's Board of Education states expectations regarding civility within [Policy 6341](#). Again, thank you for your partnership in helping to maintain a safe school community environment for all.

Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day | November 14, 2024



Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day November 14th

Join us on Nov. 14, as students across the country will participate in Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, an annual, commemorative event that honors the courage of Ruby Bridges, who made history by becoming the first Black student to integrate an all-white elementary school in New Orleans in 1960.

Students across the country now walk to school on this day to commemorate her bravery and continue the important conversation about equality and inclusion. We invite our Overland Trail families to walk to school on November 14th to participate in this nationwide event! Upon arrival join us for the events below:

OTE Activities to celebrate the day:

- 8:10 Gather at the picnic tables on the playground
 - Sidewalk chalk & bubbles will be available
 - Create a group banner!
- 8:20 Begin to "walk" to school as a group.

Parents sign up here to help!



Teacher Collaboration Days

Teacher Collaboration Days

As we kick off the 2024-25 school year, I want to remind families about the teacher professional collaboration days designed for teacher plan and collaboration time. These eight days, which occur throughout the school year, are non-student attendance days for K-5 students. These days

are vital to ensure the best possible preparation for our elementary students and key to quality teacher retention.

The following days, which can be found in the [2024-25 calendar](#) on the district website, have been designated as teacher professional collaboration days:

- August 30
- September 27
- November 1
- December 6
- January 31
- February 28
- April 11
- May 2

Reminder: November 1st is a K-5 non-student attendance day for teacher collaboration time. During this time, elementary educators will be in their buildings and classrooms working to ensure the best possible preparation for our elementary students and supporting student learning outcomes.

School will be back in session on November 2nd.

Nut-Safer Guidelines



Nut Safer List 24-25

Nut-Safer Guidelines

At OTE, we have a wide variety of food allergens and restrictions. To remain safe and to prevent exclusion, we don't accept food, including items from the Nut-Safe List, to serve in school or send home with students for birthday celebrations. This complies with our **non-edible birthday celebration**. Essentially, we must remember that sending food home is a risk for children as they transition between school and home, putting our families in an undesirable position when they cannot eat what is provided.

Blue Valley (BV) School's Nut Safer Guidelines for daily snacks will be implemented throughout the school year.

- Classroom snacks must be from the Nut Safer list.
- Nut Safer seating is available in the café during lunch.

We appreciate your support as we work to be more preventative with food safety measures to enhance student and staff safety.

The complete **Nut Safer Foods** and BV Guidelines can be found [here](#).

Helpful Links

School Supply Lists

District Calendar (2024-2025)

Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage

Family Handbook



Erica McDonald, Principal

Email: ECMcDonald@bluevalleyk12.org

Website: www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE

Location: [6225 West 133rd Street, Overland Park, KS, USA](#)

Phone: (913) 239-7000

Twitter: [@OTEMcDonald](https://twitter.com/OTEMcDonald)



Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal

Email: ARAnderson@bluevalleyk12.org

Website: www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE

Location: [6335 West 135th Street, Overland Park, KS, USA](#)

Phone: (913) 239-7000

Twitter: [@OTEAnderson](https://twitter.com/OTEAnderson)



Office Staff

- Robin Warren, Administration Assistant/Bookkeeper
- Yolonda Merritt, Administration Assistant/Registrar
- Debby Alexander, Attendance

Website: www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE

Location: [6225 West 133rd Street, Overland Park, KS, USA](#)

Phone: (913) 239-7000

Twitter: [@OTECougars](https://twitter.com/OTECougars)



Erica McDonald

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

