

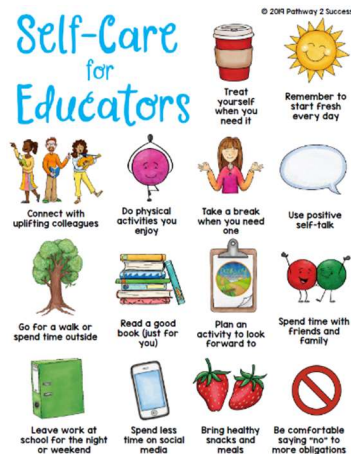
# KSLA Central Eastern Winter Newsletter

January 2024

By Julie Borden

WE have been busy this fall with gathering our members for a night of pampering and appreciation, an author visit, and our annual Holiday happy hour, enjoying food and fellowship as a group. We had many members turn out from near and far.

We had our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Fall kickoff to Literacy on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Hosted by our new program chair Lynne Finnigan. Thank you, Lynne, for such a fun evening. We enjoy food, fun, and pampering hand treatment for all the teachers who work so hard. All the teachers went home with goodie bags to continue the self-care discussed at our meeting. Our talk focused on taking care of ourselves first. We need to recognize the importance of taking care of ourselves first so we can be the best educators we can be. We had 12 members gather at Lynne's home for great food, great desserts, and great pampering. Take time in your day to relax, refresh and renew, even if it's 15 minutes of self-care. Below is the card that was shared with fellow educators. We all went home knowing the importance self-care.



**Self-Care Card**

**Fall Kickoff to Literacy: Lynne, Jessie and Darlene.**

IN November we partnered with Cedar Crest College, co-hosting the author, Debbie Mortimer. Debbie is a writer who happens to be a lawyer. Her talk was very inspirational. She shared how she was motivated to become a writer by never seeing herself as a young African American represented in books. She took this motivation and began writing books using herself and her nieces as characters.

A synopsis of our evening by member, Jessie Moser.

*Deborah Mortimer gave future and current educators a look at the pathway she took to becoming “a writer who happens to be a lawyer.” Cedar Crest college hosted the author who began to write children’s books to have representation in books that her son, nieces and nephews could relate to. Her*

*immigrant parents from Jamaican and Venezuela pushed her to become either a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer. After graduating from law school, dissatisfied, she pursued other certifications before finding freedom to pursue her dreams from someone who slipped her a piece of paper at a conference about writing. The slip of paper said, “start seeing yourself as a writer while you are working as something else. Say to yourself, you are a writer who just happens to be a lawyer.” That was the turning point for her future.*

*Her books include the following titles that are the start of a series of Zolah books that represent her six-year-old self: Zorah and the Very Big Question, When you Give a Girl a Puppy, and Summer Island. Deborah speaks to kids in schools and fields surprisingly deep questions like, “do you feel fulfilled”, “what do you do when your self-affirmations fail”, and “how do you get over making a mistake”. She realizes that kids have questions, big questions. These questions sparked her next book in the Zola series: Zolah Questions Everything.*

This was a very inspirational evening. Both educators, and pre-service teachers enjoyed her talk. Debbie Mortimer has also been invited to be an Author in Residence in the Allentown School District, bringing her talents to inspire young students in Allentown’s diverse school district. My preservice teachers were very inspired by her talk, and our class discussion that evening was led by Debbie’s journey to finding the path that was right for her. We never know what our career choices and future may hold for us.

IN December, we wrapped up 2023 with our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Holiday Happy Hour. Though our group was small we enjoyed good food and good fellowship as we shared stories of our favorite personal books that we are reading for fun. We played the JINGLE Bell game, like SPARKLE in your classroom. We spelled out JINGLE And the person saying Bell, got to choose a gift. We were pleased to Welcome Sondra Jones who made the big trip down from Tamaqua. We welcome her to joining our KSLA Central Eastern events whenever she can.



Holiday Happy Hour: Deb, Sondra, Lynne, Kelly, Leanne

Spreading Literacy through book donations is central to KSLA Central Eastern’s mission and we were blessed to be able to donate books this fall to East Allentown Food Bank, Bright Hope and Cay Galgon Life House. Our goal is to continue promoting literacy in our local community throughout 2024. From all of us at KSLA Central Eastern, we wish you success in 2024! We look forward to inspiring students and teachers as we all embrace the of love of learning and literacy in the coming year.

