



October 11, 2007

Dear Families,

This is an exciting year for Trillium Academy with the expansion of the building as well as a finalist position for Michigan Charter School of the Year. We also have made some wonderful improvements to our educational programming. We continue each year to research and find best practices and information to use with your children. As educators we are very passionate about making a difference in the lives of your children and being a part of the foundation process which will lead them to be successful adults. Part of the process in helping our students to become successful adults is reflected in our Montessori philosophy approach of teaching students to be respectful, responsible, and resourceful. Teaching these three character traits is difficult to do alone and requires assistance and transition from school to outside of school. Family support is essential to any facet of our educational program, but is the most crucial in teaching your children to gain these character traits.

One of the ways to have family support is by modeling these character traits to your students. It is difficult for the Trillium staff to enforce following rules and guidelines if the families are not doing this also. I know it seems minor when you park in a non-parking area; however this portrays the notion to students that they do not have to follow the rules because their families are not following the rules. It is also important that families require students to be in proper uniform before coming to school. If families permit otherwise and become upset with the school staff for enforcing this rule, it sends a message to students that they do not have to follow rules that they do not agree with or like. It is also difficult to teach students how to talk to peers and staff members appropriately when they see or hear their families talking to other students, parents, and staff in an impolite way. Please understand that the staff members here are trying to do their job and while there are disagreements between staff members and families we need to ensure that we are modeling positive problem solving communication to our students, however under no circumstances will staff, families, guests, or students be permitted to use foul-language in the school building or in the presence of the school community. This process helps the student to be a respectful, and therefore respected, individual.

A second way to show family support is by allowing students to be held accountable for
(Continued on reverse side)

their actions. It is difficult for the Trillium staff to teach students responsibility in making choices if families are not doing this also. We expect that when a student makes a choice that results in a negative consequence that they are learning from their mistakes so that the behavior does not continue. Typically students that do not want the negative consequence try to get themselves out of it by placing blame or other excuses. We find

15740 Racho Rd.
Taylor, MI 48180 734-374-8222 734-374-5025 Fax

that when family support is given to have the student take ownership and accountability for what they have done we see an improvement in the student's ability to make positive choices. It also helps us to ensure that we can continue the teaching and learning relationship. Another example of teaching responsibility is having students clean up after themselves at lunch. It is extremely important for students to own the responsibility and be required to clean up food, trash, and mess on the table and floor for which they participated in. We would also like to see this responsibility carried out into the school grounds and community. Taking care of our environment is an important responsibility that all students need to learn. This process helps the student to learn how to be a responsible citizen.

A third way that families can help support their children learning these character traits is by reminding and redirecting students to use their resources to problem solve. It is difficult for the Trillium staff to teach students how to best solve their problems if family members try to do it for them. We want our students to use communication and logical reasoning skills to find answers and know where to go for help other than just their parents. It is important for students to understand that parents/families are not going to be available in every setting and they will need to know how to get assistance elsewhere. To offer an example of this, if your child is having a difficult time in class with the material or another student, we need them to learn to go to someone immediately who can help. A good choice would be either their classroom teacher or another educator in the building. If the student doesn't take care of the problem when it happens and instead waits to go home to have the family member take care of it the next day, it may not be able to be solved as effectively as if the child communicated the problem right away. This process helps the student to be resourceful in helping themselves and problem solving.

The Trillium staff cares very much for your children and we want to see them learn and grow into respectful, responsible, and resourceful young adults. We cannot do this alone and hope that you will take a vested position in supporting your students to move in this direction. Together we can make this happen and we will all reap the benefits, especially your children.

Thank you,



Mrs. Romanowski
Trillium Academy Principal

Please sign and return to your child's teacher showing that you have received and read this letter.