

The Oakwood Times



21st Century Journalists • Reporting the News... VIRTUALLY! • December Edition

Governor's Educator of the Year Award Nominees Written by Dr. R. Morrisroe



Lakenya Griffin-Francis

The Oakwood Times would like to recognize and congratulate the Oakwood Avenue Community School's 2020-2021 Nominees for the Governor's Educator of the Year Award: Mrs. *Lakenya Griffin-Francis*, *Teacher of Elementary* and Ms. *Pamela Venable*, *School Counselor*.

The process of which to be nominated for this award required the school community to nominate the candidate who, "highlights educational innovation, student achievement, the rewards of teaching, and important services outside the classroom environment that lead to student success."

(NJDOE - <https://www.nj.gov/education/recognition/educators/geoy/>)



Pamela Venable

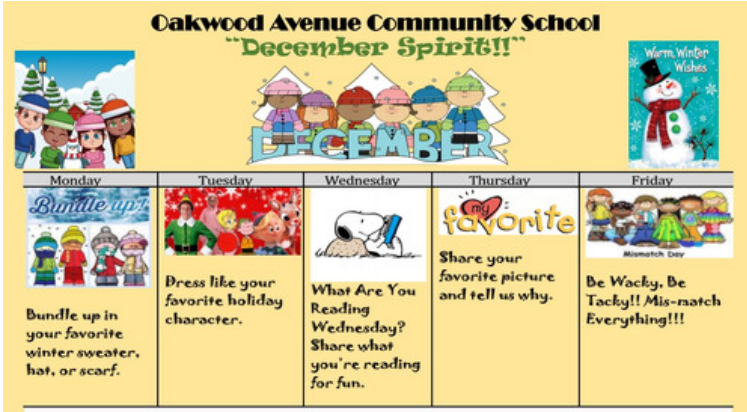
Congratulations Mrs. Lakenya Griffin-Francis, Teacher of Elementary, and Ms. Pamela Venable, School Counselor for this great achievement.

Conferences Go Virtual Written by Tomiwa Abodunrin

Since March 2020, the Coronavirus has been making changes to just about everything. Schools have been faced with altering routines in their classrooms and this past November, change remained the constant in the education world. Teachers added another new item to their list of "new things," and that new item was hosting parent/teacher conferences...online.

Parent/teacher conferences are always a hot topic because this is where parents can come into the school and meet their child's teacher, face to face, to discuss their child's progress throughout the school year. This is something that both parents and teachers look forward to throughout the school year. No one wanted that tradition to change. As a result teachers and staff worked vigorously to ensure that parents were able to share in that practice and experience, virtually.

The Oakwood Community devised a strategic plan by setting up convenient meeting times for parents, ensuring the correct Google Meet code was distributed, and turning conference notes into a digital format. It turns out that virtual conferences were quite the success! Parent participation was extremely high, and both parents and teachers felt a comfort in being able to reach the main goal of conferences - discussing the child's progress. As it turns out, we can do much more virtually than we ever expected!



Oakwood Avenue Spirit Week

Written by Kenny Abatti

During the week of December 7, The Oakwood Eagles continued winter traditions and held their annual school Spirit Week. From warm sweaters and hats to wacky tacky mismatch day, spirits were really brightened as students and teachers participated in this year's Spirit Week.

"Spirit Week is about having fun and getting the students excited to participate, as well as celebrating the winter holidays," said Ms. Hrabar, 3rd Grade Teacher.

Oakwood staff members spent a lot of time coming up with different daily activities and figuring out how to properly execute them virtually.

One of the school's many activities during Spirit Week are the dress-up days. Students and staff were encouraged to dress up in different clothing daily. For instance, dress in winter attire, dress as your "favorite holiday character," and "wacky and tacky" mismatched clothing.

"My favorite day of Spirit Week was Monday because I love scarves and I usually match the scarf with my outfit for that day," said Dr. Morrisroe. "I also love the way it feels to be bundled up and feel warm and comfortable while hard at work." (Continued P. 4, Spirit Week)

Oakwood Avenue's Awards Ceremony

Written by Taiwo and Kenny Abatti

Under the leadership of Principal Dana Gaines, Oakwood Avenue Community School, has taken a new motto this year; "Pride, Passion, and Purpose." Students at Oakwood School are expected to take pride in their work. Students at Oakwood are expected to be passionate about their studies. Lastly, students at Oakwood are encouraged to have purpose in all that they do in order to achieve their goals.

This motto has been implemented in classrooms and students are really embracing the new mindset. To honor the hard work and dedication of being the best scholars they can be, Oakwood School held various virtual Awards Ceremonies for the students to celebrate their achievements. Oakwood families came to a virtual meeting to watch as their child received various awards. The pride was palpable! The academic awards were Principals Academic Honor Roll, Academic High Honor Roll, as well as the Perfect Attendance Award.

In addition, Oakwood School gifted YEEZY sneakers for the students who received Principals Academic Honor Roll, Academic High Honor Roll, and Academic Honor Roll.

Thank you Oakwood families for participating in this event and we hope you enjoyed it.



Oakwood Celebrates the Winter Holidays

Written by Taiwo Abatti



Winter is a great time for family events at school, especially this year. Due to the Coronavirus, the Oakwood family has not been able to host many in-person school events. Nonetheless, Oakwood School celebrated the Winter Holidays! Although the temperature was dropping, the hearts of Oakwood families were warming up for the holidays and a chance to be together. The Oakwood staff found it necessary to create an event where “masked” families can gather (while social distancing) and create new memories.

“The Holiday Gift of Warmth”, a December event, held at Oakwood Avenue Community School, focused on providing students the opportunity to spend time with their families while picking out a few warm gifts.

Although this was an event to bring families together; all the social distancing protocols were followed.

This event provided two different time slots and Oakwood students came to “shop” for their gifts according to grade level. Pre-K to Third Grade students came to the school at 10:00-10:30 and Fourth Grade to Seventh Grade students came from 10:45-11:00. Everyone who attended the event was required to wear a mask and be mindful of social distancing. Lastly, all the gifts that students took home were grab and go gifts. All goodies that were selected, were brought home, and opened once students returned home.

A fourth-grade student Kenny said, “I like that students got to take presents home and open them when they got home, or open them on Christmas at home.” The event was a success and definitely one to remember.



The Holidays - Social Distance Style

Written by Tobi Ndubuisi

The holidays are time for traditions. Most of those traditions involve seeing our loved ones; however, COVID-19 struck again. Due to the many worries of spreading the virus, families had to reconsider their holiday plans for 2020. Families may have wanted to visit their loved ones or celebrate with a great, big holiday meal, but it was soon time to reconsider those plans. This holiday season, plans were modified to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to keep friends, families, and communities safe. It turns out, people were able to get very creative.

Some families had virtual holidays to celebrate by joining their loved ones on the pandemic's most popular apps like Zoom and Google Meet. Families were able to share meals, gifts, and yes, even love, through the screens during the holidays this year. There were families who chose to get together but were extremely cautious about the COVID-19 guidelines. Families who got together took into consideration the setting of their holidays, making sure the space was large enough to hold few people safely. Other families made sure to use hand sanitizer and keep appropriate distance from their loved ones while wearing a mask.



Holiday celebrations normally brings a large amount of travel. Traveling was not advised this year; however, for those who chose to travel, they were asked to be cautious, as travel would increase chances of spreading the virus. Regardless of what families were able to do this year, it seems that loved ones made the best of the situation. 2020 was a year for the books and definitely a year of changes to tradition. We hope that you all made new traditions and enjoyed time with loved ones. Most of all, we want to wish you an incredibly Happy New Year!

Spirit Week Continued...

Other activities within the week were “what are you reading” and “share your favorite picture”. “What are you reading” was the event on Wednesday, where students posted different books that they were currently reading for fun. On Thursday, “share your favorite picture” was where students shared their favorite picture with the class. Miss Hrabar said, “It was a really nice opportunity to feel connected to the students.”

Oakwood Avenue Community School truly kept the magic alive by having such an exciting event during these times. Students and teachers were involved and guess what, they had fun, too! Fourth grade student, Taiwo, said her favorite part of Spirit Week was, “waiting to see what students and teachers were going to be wearing each day.”

One thing is true; Google Meets were filled with cozy, wacky clothes, holiday characters, books, and family photos during Spirit Week at Oakwood Avenue Community School. Thank you to the students and teachers for participating in this event. We hope you enjoyed Spirit Week!

The Oakwood Times

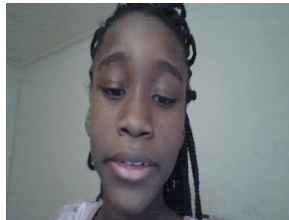
The Oakwood Times Staff

We would like to thank our journalists who are working tirelessly to report the news at Oakwood Avenue Community School.

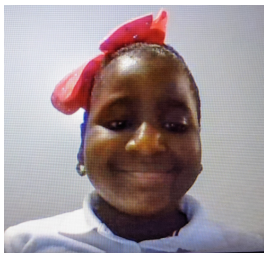
We are extremely excited to announce the featured journalist of The Oakwood Times! We look forward to providing fact-based reporting all school year on the best stories at Oakwood Avenue Community School.

Featured Journalist

Tomiwa Abodunrin



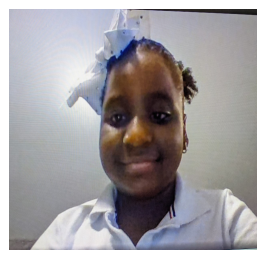
Tomiwa is a Fourth Grade student at Oakwood Avenue Community School. Her favorite instrument is the guitar. She loves to sing, rap, dance, and act. She loves her family. She is the oldest child of four; two younger brothers and one younger sister.



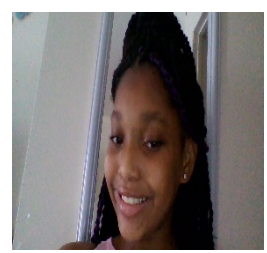
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