

Dear Families and Friends,

April 3, 2018

I was called this morning to be informed of the passing of our beloved Althea. Many, and I would imagine most of you learned of this before me this morning. The teachers became aware that many if not most of the third through fifth grade class knew of this as well. Some of the students in the K-2 came into school as well talking amongst themselves about Althea. In speaking to Nancy, she did not think any of the pre-school children were aware. I tell you of this as most of you know that we believe that parents are the “first responders” and it is their role to share such important information. In this case, it appears that many of you had already shared this sad news, while others were not yet aware.

A decision was made by Mrs. Westra to offer a forum to talk and the children quickly spoke of their fond thoughts and memories of Althea. They also quickly were thinking of ways they could share their love and caring with Charles and Henry. Mrs. Hoidal shared the read aloud book called “ The Invisible String” by Patrice Karst which is a story about a little boy and girl that were anxious about missing their mother. The mother explained the notion that invisible strings exist between all people and animals that we love. The string bonds us forever with people and pets whether they are living with us, far away or no longer with us. This string can always connect their heart with their loved one. Each child was given a white pipe cleaner to represent his or her own invisible string and were asked with whom would they share it with. Students shared their family members, pets, friends, missing pets and some mentioned Althea.

I joined Mrs. Westra’s class and we decided as a class to write a poem about Althea, an idea generated from one of the students. The students worked in pairs to create a stanza to contribute to the group poem. We have included a copy for each family to share in this kind and loving gesture. I am also attempting to put some resources to help you to talk to the children and for yourselves as well as we go through this period of mourning together. I will be available to talk to any of the students and to any of you as well. Thank you again for sharing your amazing, kind, and thoughtful children with us here at school. We were so lucky to have Althea in our lives.

Thinking of You, Denise with a little help from my friends

# Althea

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
She loved to garden,  
We miss her too.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
When we see a flower,  
It reminds us of you.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
Althea was special,  
And we miss you.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
She put on Band-Aids,  
And she knew what to do.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
She was my friend,  
What about you?

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
She liked to garden,  
I do too.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
I look at those jellyfish,  
And I think of you.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
She enjoyed ice cream,  
And children too.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
Althea loved us,  
And we loved her too.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
She loved the school,  
And the children too.

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
We miss you,  
And your kindness too.

Love, the 3-5 Class

