



JACKSON AREA COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE SOURCE



# YMCA Water Safety Program May 28-31

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# Give Your Child Confidence in and Around Water

By Bonnie Gretzner  
Jackson YMCA

Teaching children how to be safe around water is not a luxury; it is a necessity. The YMCA's Safety Around Water program helps ensure kids learn essential water safety skills.

Held May 28-31 at the Downtown Branch of the YMCA, the annual Safety Around Water program is a free, four-day course that teaches children ages 3-14 the skills that will reduce the risk of drowning and give them confidence in and



around water. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drowning is the second-leading cause of unintentional injury and death (after motor vehicle crashes) among children ages 1-14.

A typical Safety Around Water session includes:

- Exercises to help children adjust to being in water
- Instruction in "Jump, Push, Turn, Grab" and "Swim, Float, Swim," two skill sets children can use if they unexpectedly find themselves in the water
- An activity that teaches children about specific safety topics such as pool rules and boating safety
- A fun game to encourage comfort and activity around water

"The goal is to get kids comfortable around water," said YMCA Aquatics Director Alexa Markham. "They will learn what to do if they fall into water; they will learn why life jackets are important and how to put them on and much more."

Markham said the YMCA pool is often kids' first exposure to water. "Some have never been to the pool, and they are terrified of water," she said. "After a few lessons, they have so much more confidence. In addition to learning these potentially life-saving skills, kids gain a chance to bond with family and friends, a sense of accomplishment and the health benefits of exercise."

How to register: Although the program is free to the community, pre-registration is required because space is limited.

Stop by the YMCA, 127 W. Wesley St., downtown to register, sign a waiver and reserve a time slot; available times are 4:45-5:15 p.m.; 5:30-6 p.m.; and 6:15-6:45 p.m. Kids come each of those days, Tuesday through Friday, for 30 minutes. All participants should bring a swimsuit and towel, although a limited number are available for use on a first-come, first-served basis. Questions? Call the YMCA at 517.782.0537.

Sign up today for this free YMCA program for ages 3-14.



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Learn to be a Tourist in Your Hometown

# Consider One Random Act of Kindness This Month

*By Val Herr*

I started this project because honestly, I was tired and overwhelmed by people's negative comments about Jackson. Every town has issues, and yes they need to be addressed, but every town also has things and people that are unique, something to be proud of and recognized. This is what I have been trying to do: highlighting the positives of Jackson and why I chose to live, work, and play here. This month I am focusing on the people of Jackson. While I have never lived outside of Jackson County, I have worked all over the state, and honestly, the people in Jackson County are some of the best I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. While we have amazing parks, golf courses, and restaurants, it's the people who at some point had the vision to create these experiences and trusting that the people who came after them would value and take care of them so others may also have amazing experiences. These people didn't think of themselves, they thought of others. I am a big supporter of self-care, but you don't have to compromise self-care for being kind and doing for

others. It's about balance. If everyone in Jackson did one random act of kindness every day in May think of the possibilities. Seriously, take a minute and think.... Think about the message this sends to our kids, neighbors, co-workers and total strangers. We won't be able to fix the world's problems, but we can have a positive impact on those we encounter. I challenge you to care about the people in your community and act. Below is an example of 30 Days of Kindness for adults and ideas for kids. When you do a random act of kindness this month share it on social media #jacksonpositive. Let's see what a difference we can make in just 30 days.


30 Days OF KINDNESS

<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 1 Send a Thank You Note to an old teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 2 Buy a cup of Coffee for someone and smile	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 3 Stop and Hold the Door today for someone
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 4 Call your Mom and Dad and Talk	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 5 Leave a "Hope You're Having a Good Day" Note on someone's car	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 6 Buy Flowers for Someone
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 7 Do something KIND and unexpected for your spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 8 Acknowledge a Book that Changed you Life and Recommend It	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 9 Wave to Someone Today
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 10 Leave a Bottle of Water for your Mailman	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 11 Drop an Email to your Sibling with a memory	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 12 Bake Cookies for an elderly neighbor
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 13 Leave \$5 in a vending machine	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 14 Write a Letter to a Soldier	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 15 Pay someone a compliment
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 16 Pick up the tab somewhere	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 17 Call someone you haven't talked to in awhile	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 18 Just TALK with someone today who needs it
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 19 Show support to someone today	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 20 Donate something today	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 21 Pick up trash
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 22 Pass out a balloon to someone	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 23 Make a Wish for Someone	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 24 Buy from a small business
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 25 Forgive someone	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 26 Surprise a friend	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 27 Tell someone why you admire them
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 28 Offer to help someone	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 29 Tell 5 people today to have a GOOD DAY	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 30 Encourage someone else to take a 30 Day Kindness Challenge

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## Habitat for Humanity

# Challenges are Great for Many

By Wendy Clow  
Habitat for Humanity

Janet was sitting at her kitchen table after getting her kids on the bus. She was on her second cup of coffee and had a couple of hours before she had to get ready for work. Working the evening shift makes for a long day, and she had things to get done before going in. At this moment she was looking at her list of bills she had to pay and trying to figure out how she was going to make the money stretch this month.

Janet is a 29-year-old single mom of three kids, ages 9, 6 and 5. The father of the 9-year-old has never been in the picture. He was a mistake she made when she was 19, and when he learned she was pregnant, he took off. Three years later she met and moved in with a man she thought would be her forever partner. She was wrong again. That relationship ended a couple of years ago, and she's been on her own ever since.

As a custodian at the local hospital, Janet earns \$10/hour. The father of her two youngest children is supposed to pay \$250/month in child support, but he lost his job and hasn't paid in over six months. She receives nothing from the father of her oldest. She's thought

about going back to school so that she can get a better job at the hospital, maybe as a nurse. But a nursing program requires full time hours at school, between classes and clinicals, and she's barely able to work enough to pay the bills and take care of her kids as it is.

Janet's monthly bills are: \$550 for rent, \$50 for a phone, \$150-200 for utilities, \$100 for insurance, \$30 for trash pick-up and \$70 for TV/internet. Depending on the time of year and her shifts at work, she sometimes also has to pay \$75 a week for child care. So her monthly expenses total anywhere between \$1,050 and \$1,300, and that doesn't include groceries, gas for her car, or anything extra her kids may need. Fortunately, her car is paid for – she bought a cheap one with her tax refund last year. At \$10/hour, Janet's take-home pay is roughly \$1,200/month.

With Janet's income and family size, she qualifies for government assistance for food and health care. She relies on the help of family and friends for child care if she can when she works a late or overnight shift. Janet and her three children live in a two-bedroom apartment – it's all they can afford. Luckily, her oldest and youngest

are boys and can share a room. And she and her daughter share the other room...

Ok... Janet is a fictitious character, made up for this story in order to illustrate the reality for so many people in our community. Janet may not be a real person, but there are virtually thousands of 'Janets' living among us, and for them, the scenario described above is a very real situation.

In the city of Jackson, the annual median household income is less than \$29,000. Approximately 37% of people in the city live below that level of income. 69% of those who live in poverty in the city are single females. The average rent for a 3-bedroom home is \$770.

For a parent like Janet, who is beyond stressed about making ends meet just so she can feed, clothe, and house her kids, there is no room left to worry about other things like education, good health, and planning for the future. Housing is one of the most basic needs for a family, and until that need is met, others can't be. Meeting that need often keeps a family living in poverty stuck in the cycle of poverty, because there isn't time or money available to do the things necessary to



climb out of the hole.

In Janet's scenario, she's paying more than half of her income on housing. This is happening in cities all over the country, and it's unacceptable. The department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has programs specifically to help people like Janet with their housing needs. Two of HUD's programs used by the city of Jackson are CDBG and HOME. Among other things, these programs are designed to subsidize the cost of building and/or rehabbing housing units for low income families and require the monthly expense for the families living in the units to be less than 30% of their income. In recent years, funding for these programs has been significantly reduced. Every year, they get put on the chopping block in the federal budget, with only aggressive intervention from advocates who lobby legislators to keep them, preventing them from being cut altogether.

There are so many challenges for people living in poverty, and many organizations in our community have programs in place to help. Assistance is available for everything from food, to housing, to health care, to child care, and more. This assistance is often provided by nonprofits like Community Action Agency, Habitat for Humanity, Jackson Housing Commission, Center for Family Health, Jackson Interfaith Shelter, food banks... to name a few. Countless others exist, serving a wide range of needs. The only way these organizations can exist and do the work they do is by the generosity of people like you in our community who give their time in volunteer hours and dollars in donations.

If you're able, please look into finding a way to help whichever organization speaks to your heart. Giving of your time and other resources to help people in need is the most rewarding thing you'll ever do.



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## My Beautifully Inspired Mess

# Beautiful Butterflies

By Kelli Schweizer



Happy May! It is FINALLY starting to warm up and giving us time to enjoy some beautiful days outside. I don't know about you, but it seemed like an extra-long winter cooped up inside of the house and then a very rainy spring where we spent even MORE time inside! What are some of your favorite things to do with your kiddos while playing outside? One of ours is looking for butterflies! That served as my inspiration for our crafts this month, Beautiful Butterflies! These were so easy to do – and BONUS – they can make an extra special Mother's Day gift for Grandma! We created two different butterflies, and a lot of the materials you may already have on hand!

birthday party, so they were already a pretty color!)

- Pipe cleaners
- Scissors
- Gems, stickers or markers

### How To:

Step 1: Flip over your paper plate – cut out two large triangle shapes – one on the top and one on the bottom. You'll be left with a small middle area and what looks like two wings.

Step 2: Wrap a pipe cleaner around the small middle area, leaving both ends sticking up to look like the antenna.

Step 3: Let the kiddos decorate the butterflies as they wish! Ta-da! Easy Peasy!

Kelli is a stay at home mom with three children. Before becoming a stay-at-home mom, she was an Account Executive for Mlive Media Group. Now you'll find her enjoying being a mother and photographer.



### Coffee Filter Butterflies

#### Materials Needed:

- Coffee filters
- Water
- Food coloring
- Bowls to mix water and food coloring
- Paintbrush
- Clothespin
- Googly eyes
- Glue
- Something to cover your table with (we just used paper plates)

#### How To:

Step 1: Lay out something to cover your table, or use paper plates to hold the coffee filters.

Step 2: Mix a few drops of food coloring with water in individual bowls. We used red, yellow and blue. You can use whatever colors you'd like!

Step 3: Using a paintbrush, brush the 'paint' mixture onto the coffee filters. They are such pretty water-colors!

Step 4: Let the painted coffee filters dry overnight.

Step 5: Glue googly eyes onto a clothespin.

Step 6: Once coffee filter is dry, bunch up the middle and clip with clothespin. You've now created two beautiful, water-colored wings!

### Paper Plate Butterflies

#### Materials Needed:

- Paper plates (we used leftover paper plates from a

Photos by Kelli Schweizer

Above: Ryan Schweizer beams with pride as he shows off his butterfly creation. Below: Evan and Sophie Schweizer carefully add colors to their coffee filter butterfly.

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# Jackson School of the Arts is so Much Fun, Kids Do Not Realize They are Learning

By Amy Fracker,  
Assistant Director

Jackson School of the Arts

The sun is finally starting to shine a little brighter and we're getting closer to summer. I, like most parents are starting to try and figure out how to engage my child this summer. I know my daughter wants her hang out time with friends, but I love to throw her into some good old creative outlets. It helps that I work at the best place for fun summer opportunities! So, let me share with you why it's so important to keep you kids engaged in learning during summer break.

When it comes to certain kinds of knowledge, kids really do have to "use it or lose it." This is especially true for kids with learning and attention issues. Summer learning loss can set kids with learning and attention issues back as much as two to three months. So it's essential to strike a balance between reinforcing academic skills and having lots of summer fun.

I love that at Jackson School of the Arts, our classes are so fun that kids don't even realize they are learning. It's about achieving that balance of getting kids engaged to learn and yet have an enjoyable experience at the same time. Kids need a break from the

routine of the school day.

A summer break also helps relieve some of the pressure experienced during the academic year. Students not pressured by midterms, term papers and final exams are more free to explore personal projects at their own pace during the summer. Personal ventures, such as an art project can be just as enriching as structured class. Free time helps foster creativity often overlooked during the regular school year and makes individuals more well-rounded. Pursuing personal interests such as dancing, or theater ven-

tures out of one's own free will and on one's own time can be even more worthwhile than sticking to the structured regime of classes and internships. These projects will shine on resumes as they exhibit true passion and interest on the individual's part.

In addition to keeping the brain moving, we strive to keep the body moving as well. Summer is a great time to try out something new. A dance class for example. Maybe your child takes a ballet class during the school year - for a change in the summer, try hip hop or acro. My



daughter loved her theater class last summer. For her it was fun to pretend and meet new friends. I know I loved that she was practicing public speaking and being comfortable in front of a crowd.

I also love that during summer classes kids get to meet new friends. My daughter loves that at

Jackson School of the Arts she has friends that don't go to her school. What a wonderful way to broaden her friend base. She looks forward to seeing her JSA friends every summer!

Take a look at our website: [Jacksonarts.org](http://Jacksonarts.org) and start making your plans! It's going to be a great summer!



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Under A.G. Edwards our practice's quickly grew and relocated from One Jackson Square to the Fields Building at the corner of Jackson Street and Michigan Avenue in downtown Jackson in 1994.

In 2007 the entire firm of A.G. Edwards & Sons was purchased by Wachovia Corporation which combined the firm with Wachovia Securities. In 2009, Wachovia Corp. including Wachovia Securities, was purchased by Wells Fargo & Company and our practice became part of Wells Fargo Advisors.

In 2019, the entire Jackson office transferred to an independent platform supported by Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network, and became today's Meridian Wealth Management of Michigan, still located in the Fields Building in Jackson.



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# Fun For All Ages This Spring and Summer in Jackson

*By Aaron Dimick, Public Information  
Officer for the City of Jackson*

With spring in full swing and summer on the horizon, the Parks and Recreation Department is getting ready to offer fun for all ages in the City of Jackson.



The City is offering a wide range of youth programs this year. Popular activities like soccer, gymnastics, tennis, and swim lessons are all returning, along with special

youth camps.

We're offering our first-ever Wrestling Camp for grades 3 through 6 at Jackson High School in July. That's in addition to our football, track and basketball camps.

Adults can also look forward to getting active this summer, taking advantage of soccer, tennis, pickleball and water aerobics programs. You will also have opportunities to get friends together and participate in our planned dodgeball and wiffleball tournaments.

We also want to make sure residents ages 50 and over are engaging in activities that are designed to support independence and enhance quality of life. Bingo, walking, coloring, travel programs and monthly dinners are just a few of the activities the City offers.

The Ella Sharp Golf Course and our two community centers, the Boos Center and the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, also offer long lists of programs to keep residents moving all spring and summer.

The opening of the pool at Nixon Park is a highly anticipated event. The pool is scheduled to open Monday, June 17 and will stay open through the summer until Saturday, August 17. Families can cool off by splashing around in the pool or taking a trip down the water slide. Nixon Park also features a skate park for skate-



*Photo contributed by the City of Jackson*

**Above: Nixon Park pool, bursts with excitement during the summer months in Jackson. Below: Basketball is one of the many organized sports offered by the Jackson Parks & Recreation Department.**

boarders.

To learn more about these programs, go to the Parks and Recreation page of the City's website, [cityofjackson.org](http://cityofjackson.org). A full brochure of spring and summer programs can be found online. Paper copies are also distributed through Jackson Public Schools. Registration forms can also be obtained online or by visiting the Parks and Recreation Department at Jackson City Hall.

The City of Jackson wishes everyone a safe and active warm-weather season. We hope residents take advantage of all the wonderful activities our community has to offer.





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Imagine Planet

Thank you so much to the Speckhard Knight Foundation which once again is instrumental in keeping our doors open. Thanks for the continued support!

As I write this, the spring peepers are calling loudly. There are 13 species of frog and toad in Michigan. Toads do not have teeth. Frogs have teeth but do not bite people. Both animals lay their eggs in water and the young are known as tadpoles. There is nothing quite as amazing as the transformation from a tadpole to a frog! The Blanchard's Cricket frog is a threatened species in Michigan and the Fowler's toad and the Pickerel frog are both species of species of special concern. For more information on Michigan's frogs and the Frog and Toad Survey, including recordings of calls, check out the DNR website. Never touch frogs or toads with hands that have hand sanitizer or bug spray on them.

"It's a good time for the DNR to remind people about state regulations regarding the collection and possession of frogs, toads and salamanders. In order to protect breeding colonies, these animals (including tadpoles) may only be collected and possessed by the public from the last Saturday in May through Nov. 15. Outside of this possession season, the public is encouraged to take walks and observe them in their natural habitat but not interfere with or directly handle the animals. When the possession season opens May 26, people 17 years of age and older are required to

have a 2018 recreational fishing license to collect and possess frogs, toads and salamanders. A strict possession limit of 10 animals (in any combination) is enforced.

Practicing catch-and-release techniques is a great way for parents to encourage their children's natural curiosity about frogs, toads and salamanders," said DNR biologist Tom Goniea. "We also strongly recommend not trying to keep wild frogs, toads or salamanders as pets, because they generally will not survive well in captivity." Regardless, when the season closes Nov. 15, all living frogs, toads or salamanders collected and in possession from the open season must be released back into the wild." (DNR website) Enjoy!

Imagine Planet has our own pair of frogs, but they don't come from Michigan. White's tree frogs (*Litoria caerulea*) are an adaptable species native to Australia and New Guinea. A milky white coating called "caer-viein" helps them survive in dry areas, allowing them to live in agricultural and suburban areas. White's tree frogs are rather large, ranging in length from 3 to 4.5 inches (7 to 11.5 centimeters). Females are usually slightly bigger than the males.

The first impression that any visitors to Imagine Planet have is that our frogs are fake. White's tree frogs look like toy frogs. They don't move a lot and are comparatively large. "These frogs range in color from a light blue to emerald green or almost gray across their backs and milky white bellies. Females have white

throats, and males have a grayish wrinkled vocal sac underneath their throat. Like many other tree frogs, White's tree frogs can change color to some degree.

These frogs have enormous toe pads with partial webbing between fingers and almost complete webbing between toes. The eye has a horizontal pupil; most other tree frogs have vertical pupils. The fatty ridge over the eye is a distinctive feature of the species.

The White's tree frog is native to Australia and southern New Guinea and has been introduced to New Zealand. These tree frogs can live in either seasonally dry or wet habitats. They prefer moist, forested environments but have skin that can adjust to drier situations. White's tree frogs do not typically live in or near water, but instead live in trees. Rain collects on leaves, in cup-shaped plants and in crevices in tree trunks, allowing the frogs access to water. These places are replenished with water from the almost daily rains and the frogs always have a source of water to keep themselves moist." (National Zoo website) Our frogs are domestically bred and quite used to being handled. Their skin adaptations allow them to be handled more easily than other frogs. This species' conservation status is that of least concern.

Imagine Planet has a lot going on this year. On Saturday, May 4th we will be having our third annual Earth and Space Science Day from 11am to 6pm here at 632 E. Michigan Ave. We will be at the Around the



Park for Autism Walk/Run on May 11th at Cascades from 10 am to 11:30, at Islands of Wellness on May 19th from 11 am to 2 pm at the fairgrounds, Kids' Fest on June 14th from 10 am to 3 pm at the fairgrounds, and the Learning Fair on

July 11th and 12th at the Northwest Upper Elementary School. These are all free and I hope you can come and see us there.

Please visit our Facebook page for more information about upcoming events and news.

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Montessori Education

North Star: A Magical Place for Learning

By Barb Barnes  
North Star Montessori  
Founder, Director, and  
Montessori Educator



Summer at North Star Montessori is a magical place where kids can have many adventures learning indoors and out. Our hands-on activities we do in our Summer Fun Classes take on a whole new level of fun in the sun. Painting and creating crafts in the fresh air inspires our young artists as we create under the shade of our favorite trees. We incorporate wonderful stories, music, movement, art and, of course, outside play in each one of our 3 day themed Summer Fun Classes. Whether it is learning the names of our colors in Spanish using teamwork and our big parachute, or painting Oceans of underwater life with our water colors at the picnic tables, or digging for dinosaur bones until we build a T-Rex, kids thrive learning by doing. We love eating our lunches outside and then hopping down to run through the grass, past our oversized sandbox, carefully traversing a log to a large rock under the shade

of several Oak trees. There we can pretend we are king of that rock, or that it is our campsite, or better yet our stage to sing our song to the world. Wherever our imaginations take us we know we will have lots of fun just being kids with our friends.

Play is the child's  
Natural Door to Learning

When asked, "What did you learn today?", most young children say, "I just played or I don't know." However, kids are learning all the time, they just don't realize it. Children might be excited to show you the acorn they found under a tree or the caterpillar they found on a leaf in the butterfly garden or some facts about dinosaur bones that

they talked about on a dino dig. However, they will not necessarily tell you how they learned to be a good friend by listening and taking turns while excavating bones, or how they learned to enjoy and respect nature and living things by observing caterpillars in the butterfly garden as they rest on the fennel leaves munching away getting fat for their cocoons. How they noticed the tiniest little things and made estimations like biggest and smallest, longest and shortest, or felt smooth and bumpy, and counted 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9... proclaiming I have 10 or he has less or we need more when gathering and collecting things like acorns, twigs, stones and other objects in nature.

If you are looking for sum-



mer fun full of hands-on experiences indoors and out check out our full listing of Summer Fun Classes at [NorthStarMontessoriJackson.com](http://NorthStarMontessoriJackson.com) or give us a call

at 787-3026 we would be happy to tell you all about them. We are also open all summer for summer care Monday - Friday 7am -5:30 pm.

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# Francis Street Primary School Inaugural Year a Resounding Success

*By Laura Wyble  
Principal*

## Francis Street Primary

As Francis Street Primary concludes our first year as a public school district, authorized by the State of Michigan, we are pleased to share with you some accomplishments and highlights of this school year:

- The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for our beautiful, new school which we have come to love
- Our first field trip to ArtPrize in Grand Rapids last September
- Our wonderful Guest Readers came in every Friday during our March is Reading Month celebration
- Our families organized a fundraiser for the playground
- The partnership we have with the Jackson YMCA
- Our Friday Reading Buddies program
- 78% of our students made significant

nificant academic progress in English language arts and math

- Our Girl Scouts Outreach program meets every week
  - The start of the Weekend Backpack Program
  - Our Wild World Animal Visit brought nature into the classroom by introducing our young naturalists to a possum, a fennec fox, a tarantula, and a Burmese python
  - The plans we are making to visit Binder Park Zoo in Battle Creek and Kids and Stuff Museum in Albion
  - We are pleased to report our student enrollment has remained consistent
  - We appreciate all of the neighborhood support
  - We are excited for the increased awareness by the community at large
  - We have truly come to enjoy our students and their families
- As we prepare for our second



year at Francis Street Primary, we look forward to:

- Continued academic progress for our students
- Our plan to add a 3rd grade
- Continuing our relationship with Community Action Agency and the Headstart Program
- Maintaining small class sizes
- Another year of serving our

children and families well. Information and enrollment forms can be found on our website ([francisstreetprimary.com](http://francisstreetprimary.com)) or by calling 517-879-1380. You are also welcome to stop in and visit Francis Street Primary at 1320 Francis St., Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM. We invite you to join the journey!



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