

Dear ,

I appreciate you taking a moment out of your busy work day to let me tell you about a wonderful collaborative educational opportunity our students are embarking upon between Jensen Beach High School and J.D. Parker Elementary. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, all students will participate in a school-wide read aloud of the novel *My Life As A Furry Red Monster* by Kevin Clash, the Sesame Street puppeteer for the beloved Elmo. The read aloud consists of each teacher reading to his/her students from the novel on a daily basis while also incorporating projects aimed at reinforcing character education. The time spent reading aloud will average about 10-15 minutes a day. The United States Commission on Reading reported in 1985 that “the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.” Shockingly, most high school students read less than ten minutes a day. We will have doubled that time in an instant!

The novel describes how Mr. Clash, a forty-five year-old six foot African American male with a deep voice became Elmo, the furry red monster with a falsetto squeal known to children and adults around the world as the eternally optimistic three and a half year old. This book shares Clash’s life lessons he has learned by playing Elmo, lessons to a happy life with a happy ending. Not only will our students have the text read aloud to them in support of our reading initiative, but we also had a cross-curricular team of teachers create fun and educational activities for teachers to do with their students to help students dream big and to remember that character matters along the way. The high school students are going to create children’s books for the J.D. Parker students exemplifying the pillars of character promoted in our Martin County Schools as well as collaborate on some puppet making activities.

Our culminating activity, for which we need your help, is to bring Mr. Clash to JBHS to speak to the students. We have booked Mr. Clash for the daytime presentation to our schools’ students on April 22<sup>nd</sup> with an additional evening presentation open for free to the public. We would like to invite you to be a part of this momentous event at 7 p.m. on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. In order to make this event free of charge (a small fee may be charged for a copy of the book for signing), we are also asking for donations to bring Mr. Clash to Jensen Beach. Due to Mr. Clash’s growing popularity as a result of his autobiography, his fee for speaking is \$10,000 plus airfare, hotel, and meals. However, we feel it money well spent for our students to meet the successful author whose story may inspire our own students to follow their dreams. In honor of your generous contribution, we would recognize your support either on a sponsorship banner or in our program. Also, if you would like us to save you a VIP spot for the presentation, please RSVP to 232-3500 Ext. 131. We look forward to seeing you there and also thank you in advance not only for making this evening possible but for helping promote Jensen Beach High School’s and J.D. Parker’s Reading Initiatives, impacting tomorrow’s future.

Thank you,

Mary K. White  
Principal  
J.D. Parker Elementary School