

New London-Spicer

Prairie Woods Elementary School

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April 25th, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians of Elementary Students:

We are saddened to share with you that we have learned that Nathaniel (Nate) Shumaker, one of our 5th grade students, will not regain consciousness following injuries sustained from a car accident that occurred on March 28th, 2018. We will truly miss Nate's spirit, compassion towards others, and his love for science.

We are aware that our elementary students have varying degrees of knowledge about Nate's situation, so we did not make a formal statement to your child at school today. We understand, however, that conversation about Nate may have occurred.

Each person deals with grief in their own unique way. Today, extra social workers and counselors were available to offer assistance for any student or staff that needed time to talk. Your child may come home wanting to talk with you about Nate. The tips and talking points below may be helpful while exploring this topic with your elementary child.

*Your child may have many questions for you about death. The answers are not always easy or clear. Help your child by simply listening to their questions as they process the loss of a fellow NLS student. Listening to each other is very important as a person tries to understand death and come to accept it.

* Encourage your child to talk about their feelings. Suggest creative ways to express feelings, such as writing in a journal or drawing a picture.

* Provide lots of affection and reassurance that your child will continue to be loved and cared for.

* Nate's family has elected to use his life to help others via organ donation. Explaining this positive aspect may help children cope with their feelings.

* Enjoy a fun activity with your child after this tough discussion. Reassure them that you are available for future conversations.

* Everyone grieves at their own pace and feelings of grief may come in waves. Please reach out to your child's teacher or the school social workers for additional support or guidance as needed.

Additional resources on handling grief and stress are available on our school website. Please follow <https://www.nls.k12.mn.us/pwsocialworkers>.

Sincerely,

Randy Juhl
Principal

Michelle Thomas
School Social Worker

Ann Dobmeier
School Social Worker