

INQUIRY CHARTER

HEALTHY OWL TIMES

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1

FALL 2025

Showing gratitude can increase joy

Spending time with people, giving thoughtful gifts, and saying, “thank you” and “I love you” are all strategies that Ms. Zaiera Thomas said she uses to show gratitude.

Ms. Zaiera, building support and substitute, told *Healthy Owl Times* reporters that “some ways people have shown gratitude toward me were hugs, kind words, gifts, and time.” She also said those things showed her that she is loved.

“Always be the person you want other people to be for you,” Ms. Zaiera said. Inquiry promotes the idea that “Joy Enhances Learning,” which means that if the school and classroom are fun and joyful, students will want to be there.

Ms. Zaiera would love to see a gratitude day once a month, where the entire day is spent sharing compliments with staff and students. She believes this will lead to an increase in joy. “Gratitude leads to better sleep and a better mood,” Ms. Zaiera said.

Ms. Zaiera reminds students that “your attitude determines your attitude; someone is always doing way worse than you, so be kind.”



Illustration by Kennedy Diggs

Healthy Owl Times reporters wrote notes to some of the people they are grateful to at Inquiry Charter School. Read whom they are thankful for on Page 2.

Volunteering is a tool to help others

Collecting canned food, toys, and clothes are some ways that Ms. Ashley Fernandez helps students and families in need and encourages the Inquiry community to volunteer.

“Volunteering is a powerful activity to share with students,” said Ms. Ashley, Inquiry’s family support specialist, in a recent interview with fifth-grade *Healthy Owl Times* reporters.

Ms. Ashley’s role at Inquiry is to help kids and families feel safe and happy. She also knows that one of Inquiry’s core values is generosity. She said she set up the food drive in November for people who were hungry. The drive gave Inquiry families an oppor-

tunity to contribute canned food to help others, she said.

To organize the food drive, Ms. Ashley said she first contacted Philabundance, an organization that seeks to end hunger in Philadelphia. She asked the group whether the school could collect cans and goods for the people. When the canned food drive ended on November 25, Inquiry sent the collected goods to Philabundance so they could distribute the cans to families in need.

Ms. Ashley said she knows how important it is to share with others. Through volunteering, she said she wants to teach that to the students at Inquiry.

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Reporters express their gratitude

Gratitude is a feeling and an action. Gratitude can help reduce stress, make people happier, lessen anxiety and reduce depression, help people sleep, and help keep our hearts healthy, according to experts at the Mayo Clinic, a large healthcare organization.

People can feel gratitude for things in their lives like friends and family, toys, experiences, a house, and food. To practice gratitude, experts recommend spending time with people, or writing thank you notes if you can't express gratitude in person.

Fifth-grade reporters showed gratitude by writing notes about some of the people at Inquiry who have helped them. Here are some their reflections.

I am grateful for the enrichment team because Ms. Liz teaches gym and new sports every day to make us better and Ms. Anna helps us with music and art. Mr. Damon helps me and everyone with mistakes. That's why I'm grateful. —*Kennedy Diggs*

Thank you, Ms. Kelly, for all that you do for me and my classmates. I am so grateful for you. When it was my first day of school, you welcomed me with love and compassion and taught me so much on my first day, from telling us you were pregnant to teaching us how to write sentences and past perfect tense to the main storyline. —*Emanee Smith*

Donating to help others

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In addition to the food drive, Ms. Ashley also helps to coordinate a toy and clothing drive for families in the community during the holidays and helps with the winter carnival to raise money for the school.

Philabundance recommends contributing non-perishable food items, which means they can sit on a shelf for a long time. Some examples: Peanut butter, pasta, macaroni and cheese, canned tuna fish or chicken, rice, canned fruit and vegetables, and cereal. —*Story by Marlee Hames-Nesmith and Alaya Thomas; illustration by Max Fernandez*



Ms. Alison, thank you for everything you do for me. You taught me hard long division and how to do division with area models. You are the best, and I am so grateful for you.

—*Amirahle Harmon*



I am grateful for Ms. Liz because she helps us work out and have fun. She teaches us how to play new sports and get better at sports that we already know. I'm also grateful for Ms. Anna because she helps us get better at music, piano, and drums, and she teaches us about new artists. I'm also grateful for Mr. Damon because he helps us with recess and he helped us learn how to play basketball and football. —*Kareem Gardner*

Thank you Ms. Kelly (Calamese)! I am so grateful for the times in second grade when you helped me and made me feel welcome when I was nervous.

—*Mali Groce*

I am grateful for Ms. Tish because she helps me with work that I need help with. Thank you for everything. —*Ni'Ke Simmons-Mitchell*

I am grateful for Nurse Azizah. Thank you for helping me when I got hurt and couldn't walk, run, or jump. Thank you! —*Josiah Allen*

I am grateful for Nurse Azizah for helping me when I have asthma attacks. You always know what to you and you are funny and make me smile when I feel down. Thank you for being you and for making me smile when I am sick. Thank you for being my BFF. —*Kaylee Elmore-Nesbitt*

Healthy Owl Times

The *Healthy Owl Times* is a publication of Inquiry Charter School, which is part of the Belmont Charter Network. Fifth-grade staff members from the Hearts class include Moirei Bartley, Rylei Brown-Kosia, Maximiliano Fernandez, Marlee Hames-Nesmith, Blake Marks, Taron McPhaul, Mason Mendoza, Karsen Simmons, Egypt Smith, Alaya Thomas, and Mahdi Wimley.

Reporters in the Skeletons class include Josiah Allen, Mariam Baker, Kaylianna Davenport, Kennedy Diggs, Imani Dixon, Kaylee Elmore-Nesbitt, Kareem Gardner, Mali Groce, Amirahle Harmon, Ni'Ke Simmons-Mitchell, and Emanee Smith.

The *Healthy Owl Times*' faculty advisor is Ms. Kelly Walsh and Inquiry Charter's head of school is Ms. Claire Cohen.

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