



Dear Parents/Guardians,

A long-standing tradition at the Academies has been the observance of the International Day of Acceptance. Originally observed as the Day of Tolerance, this event has now evolved into an opportunity for students not only to learn about new cultures and varied perspectives, but to accept and embrace the diversity that exists in our school community and our nation as a whole.

On Thursday, January 25, students and staff will observe this year's Day of Acceptance with workshops and an assembly, and wrap up with the Diversity Alliance hosting a luncheon for speakers and presenters.

We have an impressive line-up of speakers and topics this year. Alisa Roth, author of *Insane: America's Criminal Treatment of Mental Illness*, will present a lecture with discussion and interactive activity. "Media Literacy in the Age of Fake News" will be presented by Joseph Amditis, Associate Director at the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair University. Rwandan genocide survivor Consilee Nishimwe will speak about her experiences and her role as a global civil society activist and advocate for other genocide survivors. "Undocumented Families: Seeking a Compassionate Response" will explore some of the myths and realities underlying undocumented families living in the U.S. and the issues surrounding DACA, DAPA, and the Dream Act. Beth Tiger of Durga Tree International, a human rights organization working to educate and economically empower survivors of modern-day slavery, will present a conversation/workshop on women, human rights violations, and slavery today. Nancy Sytsma, Tina Nacrelli, and Caleb LoSchiavo will present "Transitioning Institutions: Navigating the World as a Transgender Person." These are compelling and timely topics, and I thank everyone involved in organizing such an impressive array of speakers and presentations.

I urge parents to speak to their children afterwards to continue the discussions that were begun during this International Day of Acceptance.

Sincerely,

Howard Lerner, Ed.D.
Superintendent