

# MCALISTER INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

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## **Autism Awareness Month**

### **McAlister Intermediate School**

As you may know, April is Autism Awareness Month. Earlier this month, McAlister staff and students recognized Autism Awareness Month by wearing blue. Students will also be working within their classrooms on activities and lessons related to Autism. Each classroom teacher will be reading Uniquely Wired by Julia Cook with their students on April 12 to inform students and help them to better understand what Autism is and how it can impact someone who has it. This short story follows a student named Zak who has Autism. Zak is obsessed with watches and is quick to share all that he knows about watches with others. As Zak describes what the world is like from his point of view, students will gain a better understanding of why Zak does certain things and will learn valuable lessons about patience, tolerance, and understanding. With the help of many community members, and the McAlister Social Skills Team, each classroom will be provided with their very own copy of Uniquely Wired to add to their classroom library.

Following April Break, students will participate in additional activities to better understand the perspectives of others, including those with Autism. Finally, to round out Autism Awareness Month, with the gracious support of the PTO, McAlister will welcome a panel of individuals from the FOCUS Center for Autism. The Focus Center for Autism is an organization out of Canton, Connecticut which provides a wide variety of services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. On April 25th, members of the FOCUS Center for Autism will speak with our students about what it is like to have Autism, to have a family member with Autism, or to work with someone who has Autism. During the school wide assembly, McAlister students will have the opportunity to listen to the stories of individuals with Autism and ask questions of the panel.

When talking to your children at home, please discuss all that they have learned over these next couple of weeks. We look forward to our upcoming learning as well as hosting the Spectrum Unplugged panel to help support the growth of social and emotional learning in our students at McAlister!

Thank you for all your help and support! Have a wonderful April Break!

*The McAlister Social Skills Team*

*The McAlister Way - kind, respectful, responsible and safe!*