



KIRK O' THE VALLEY

~ A SCHOOL COMMUNITY SINCE 1961 ~

## New Year, New Masks, Same Kids

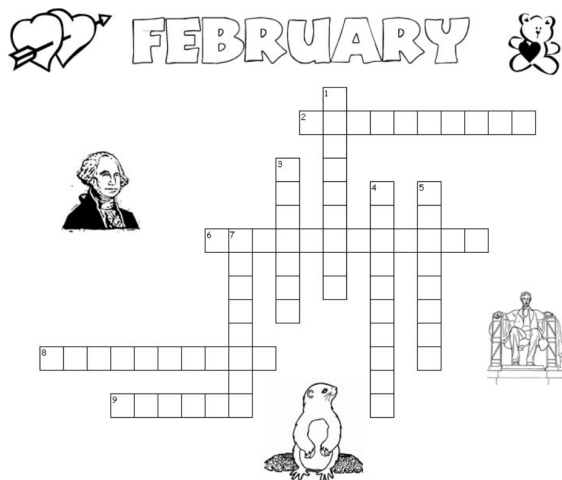
Omicron, Delta, KF94, N95, medical/surgical grade, ASTM Level 3...2...1....Happy New Year!!! Suddenly, it's 2022. Before this new year, all this lingo might have been tough for an adult to process and swallow, let alone an average first or fifth-grader. But as life has it, these words have quickly infiltrated our lives as parents, teachers, and students alike. For parents and teachers, new mask requirements means sifting through reviews, CDC recommendations, star ratings, pricing, county mandates, availability, and the worry that your children will keep that mask up over their noses and not saturate into a puddle of saliva, so that they are in fact comfortable, and most importantly, protected. For the students, the real champions here, it means one more change after almost two years of adaptations, modifications, and revisions to their normal school lives. These are changes that we cannot control, that will help us be healthy, that will help us get through this... changes that the Kirk students have resoundingly shown resilience and determination to adapt and get through (as an adult, I know that I have a hard time changing up my favorite comfy sweats after five years.) It's near impossible to imagine being my seven-year-old and having to constantly switch up a piece of fabric on my face, one that blocks expressions as important as the elation upon finding a rare Pokémon card and sharing that bliss with your BFF. It's tough man! These kids are, no doubt, rockstars. They are, no doubt, **KIRK STRONG**. So beneath the masks, whatever masks they may be, our kids remain exactly the same. They are strong, they are loving, they are determined. On Valentine's Day, why not show COVID-19 who's boss, and let's write what our faces and our hearts are feeling on our, well not sleeves, but masks. Take a marker to your mask, and write a message of love and appreciation to show everyone just how your spirit, joy, and love shine through, no matter how many layers are in front of your smile.

## Lunar New Year Dumplings

February 1 marks the Lunar New Year, and this is a favorite holiday in our house! While there are so many traditions that make this holiday fun, I'm partial to the delicious food. Dumplings are considered a lucky food to eat during Lunar New Year to wish each other prosperity for the year to come. Simply put, we eat dumplings because they look like little bags of money! Another reason people love to make dumplings is because it is a family activity where even the kids can pitch in and help with wrapping.

Go for a traditional dumpling recipe (<https://thewoksoflife.com/dumpling-recipe-youll-ever-need/>) or fill your dumplings with a filling that you know your family loves - any meatball recipe works well, a tofu version, cheese, or how about cherry dumplings a la Russia. I've never met a dumpling I didn't love before. Here's a recipe for a traditional dumpling: <https://thewoksoflife.com/dumpling-recipe-youll-ever-need/>

Otherwise, pick up some dumpling wrappers and improvise! **Happy New Year!**



### Across

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Day - A Holiday Celebrating Our Leaders
6. February is \_\_\_\_\_ Month (2 words)
8. The Sweetest Day
9. February's Season

### Down

1. February 2 is \_\_\_\_\_ Day
3. President Abraham \_\_\_\_\_
4. Our first President (last name)
5. February is the \_\_\_\_\_ month
7. Happens every 4 years (2 words)

## Why do birds fly south for New Year's Eve?

It's too far to walk.

## What's a cow's favorite holiday?

Moo Year's Eve.

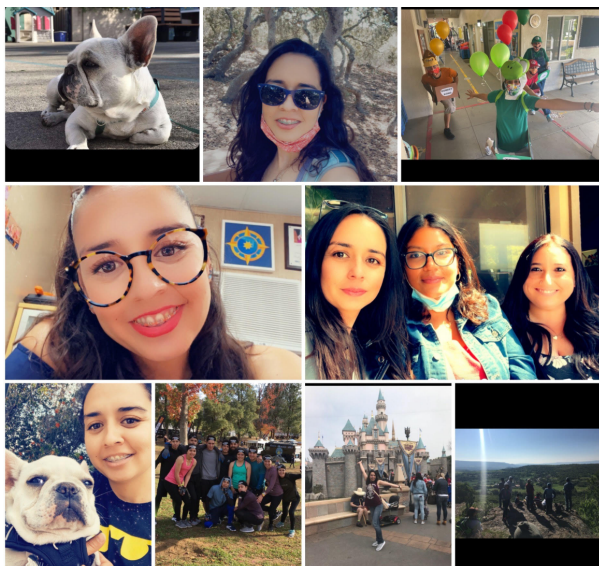
## What do dogs say on New Year's Eve?

Woof.

## Why do you need a jeweler on New Year's Eve?

To ring in the new year.





## KIRK LIFE

Many of you see Miss Lorena daily in the office, but how well do you really know this incredible woman? In this edition of **Kirk Life**, we've asked Miss Lorena a few questions so you can be a Miss Lorena expert too!

**When did you start working at Kirk?** I actually started at Kirk at the age of fourteen doing volunteer hours for my health class. Then, Carol, the previous school Director hired me for Kirk's summer camp every year until I graduated high school. When I started college, Carol asked me to run the after school program. When I finished college, I was promoted to the office. I have been here ever since!

**What is your favorite Kirk memory?** There are so many memories made here each day, so it's hard for me to choose. I would say that seeing and hearing the laughter, the happy screams, and the stories from the kiddos daily are some of my best memories.

**What is your favorite food?** I enjoy food a lot! My favorite foods are shrimp ceviche, sushi, seafood, pasta, and you can never go wrong with tacos!

**What hobbies do you have?** I love most all outdoor activities, crafts, and cooking (among others)!

**Do you have any pets?** Yes! I have one troublemaker Frenchie named, Luigi.

**Do you have a favorite place?** I haven't traveled much, but I would be happy anywhere with warm weather and tropical views.



Thanks to the incredible generosity of Kirk families (and others in the area), the Family Rescue Center was able to help over **927 children** experience a magical holiday. The strength of our community really shows in times like this, and we are so thankful to everyone who donated, coordinated, and organized the Toy Drive. Special thank you to Miss Lorena, Miss Heather, Steve Infield, and Gina Beconsall.



The month of February will launch the PTF's "Celebrating Diversity at Kirk" program. We are thrilled to be celebrating Black History Month, where we will honor the incredible contributions the Black community has made. Students will learn about noteworthy Black figures from American activist Ruby Bridges to American ballet dancer Misty Copeland.

Check out the Breezeway bulletin board in February to learn more about how African Americans have contributed to the shaping of American history.



## FAMILY LIFE

### NO(micron)

Here we are again, facing a winter surge of COVID. Between the shorter days and the endless stream of bad news surrounding this pandemic, we could probably all use a bit of cheering up. We've rounded up a couple of the internet's happiest resources to help beat these winter pandemic blues.

1. **The 1-Mile Happy Walk:** Pull up the YouTube channel Walk at Home by Leslie Sansone, and find her video called 1.0 Mile Happy Walk. This short walk-in-place exercise hits the perfect balance of dance and exercise that the whole family can get in on. If you don't laugh with each other as you make your way through the Happy Walk, you might be doing it wrong.
2. **90SecondNewbery.com:** First, you pick your favorite Newbery Award-winning kids book and then you collaborate as a family to create a 90-second dramatization of the story using your smartphone.

No one wants to have to raise a family inside a bubble—we all benefit from being surrounded by community. At this stage of the pandemic, it's going to be little things like this that help us relieve the stress of family life. Remember that even though we're socially distanced, your Kirk Community is right here happy-walking in our living rooms alongside you.

## PTF LIFE