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Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to the G.U.I.D.E. for Life podcast. Exploring topics related to the personal competency skills that empower Arkansas students and teachers to thrive at home, school, on the job and in the community.

Tammy Friend ([00:23](#)):

I'm Tammy Friend and welcome to the G.U.I.D.E. for Life podcast. Today, I am joined with some very special people. I have some guests from Oaklawn STEM magnet School, Cedarville High School, Greenbrier Eastside and Greenbrier Westside. They're going to discuss what they did for G.U.I.D.E. for Life Week last year. How they celebrated. First of all, if you, ladies and gentlemen, will just introduce yourself. Let's start with Cedarville High School.

Courtney Cochran ([00:52](#)):

Thank you so much, Tammy. We're excited to be here. I'm Courtney Cochran, the Principal at Cedarville High School.

Seth ([00:57](#)):

I'm Seth from Cedarville High School and I like to cheer.

Tammy Friend ([00:57](#)):

Awesome.

Ashleigh Gillespie ([01:03](#)):

I'm Ashleigh Gillespie. I'm the Library Media Specialist and Wellness Director at Cedarville High School.

Tammy Friend ([01:09](#)):

Awesome. Thank you. Okay, Oaklawn STEM Magnet.

Angela Millard ([01:13](#)):

I'm Angela Millard. I'm the School Counselor at Oaklawn STEM Magnet. We're part of Hot Springs School District and I have four students here with me.

Eden ([01:22](#)):

Eden

Malachi ([01:22](#)):

My name is Malachi. My favorite activity is STEM.

Anmol ([01:27](#)):

My name is Anmol. My favorite activity is math.

Ariana ([01:30](#)):

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My name's Ariana and my favorite activity is art.

Tammy Friend ([01:33](#)):

Art?

Ariana ([01:34](#)):

Yes.

Tammy Friend ([01:35](#)):

All right. Thank you. Thank you guys for sharing. Okay, Greenbrier Eastside.

Mandi Dunlap ([01:39](#)):

Hi, my name is Mandy Dunlap. I'm the Principal here at Greenbrier Eastside.

Allie ([01:43](#)):

My name is Allie and my favorite activity is probably choir.

Sherry Hogg ([01:47](#)):

I'm Sherry Hogg, the school counselor here at Eastside.

Tammy Friend ([01:50](#)):

Thank you very much, ladies. And Greenbrier Westside.

Cassie Page ([01:55](#)):

Hi, I'm Cassie Page. I'm the counselor here at Greenbrier West Side.

Andrea ([01:59](#)):

My name is Andrea and my favorite activity is Ms. Page's class.

Tammy Friend ([02:03](#)):

Is Ms. Page's class?

Andrea ([02:05](#)):

Yeah.

Tammy Friend ([02:06](#)):

What do you do in Ms. Page's class?

Andrea ([02:07](#)):

Life activities like teach you for the real world.

Tammy Friend ([02:10](#)):

Okay and that's the perfect segue, I promise we did not plan this, for the G.U.I.D.E. for Life and how these personal competency skills really do prepare us to go out into the world, rather it be career, college, whatever we pursue. That's a great segue. Thank you. It is nice meeting you all. What positive outcomes have you, teachers, counselors or students maybe you have experienced or witnessed as a result of teaching these personal competency skills that are outlined in the G.U.I.D.E. for Life? Self-management, self-awareness, relationship-building, decision-making and just social awareness. That empathy piece.

Courtney Cochran ([02:52](#)):

Yeah, I love this question. First of all, we have gone to inclusion English classes here at Cedarville High School. It's something that has benefited the whole school, and I have to brag on Seth, who last year was the president of our Kindness Committee. He has been heavily involved with the G.U.I.D.E. for Life Week activities that we did and Seth has become known as sort of a champion for the students who can't always speak up for themselves. That's one of the biggest impacts that I've seen at Cedarville High School.

Seth ([03:28](#)):

We did this thing last year during G.U.I.D.E. Week, where when we walked into lunch, you drew out of a bowl and that's where you sat. You didn't know who you were going to sit by, so you were kind of just around a bunch people, whether you knew them or not. And I think leaving that, it was kind of like I had a new idea of all these people that I had never even spoke to and I walk past these people every day and don't know anything about them. So it kind of encouraged me to go out of my comfort zone to talk to more people.

Tammy Friend ([03:54](#)):

I love that. And the fact that you have a Kindness Committee is super cool. The lunchroom is typically where those anxieties and those, "Where am I going to sit today?", especially if you're new to the school and even if you're not. I remember some students wanting to hide out in teacher's rooms because they wanted to avoid that uncomfortable feeling and that is such a great way to build relationships and just really promote empathy because you are befriending and sitting by people that maybe you didn't know before that might otherwise feel excluded. I love that. How about you all over at Oaklawn STEM? What are some things that you get from G.U.I.D.E. for Life?

Malachi ([04:40](#)):

In the understanding part of G.U.I.D.E, sometimes when I get angry and, say I'm in a confrontation with another person, I take a moment and understand their part of the story of how it all started and why we're both frustrated.

Tammy Friend ([04:57](#)):

Outstanding. You know, if all of us would do that, adults included, we can, would make a lot of progress, I think. Thank you, Malichi.

Angela Millard ([05:04](#)):

Eden had something that I thought it was neat that she actually made a home connection with the growth part of the G.U.I.D.E. for Life.

Eden ([05:11](#)):

So what I do is when my sister's upset or sad about something, what happens is I use our five-finger breathing to get her calm down a bit.

Tammy Friend ([05:21](#)):

Okay. You want to explain maybe to some of those that aren't familiar with the five-finger breathing?

Eden ([05:26](#)):

So it's where, when you use your hand, as you go up, that's when you're breathing in and then you go across your finger. That's how you hold it. And then when you go down, that means you're breathing out. You do that throughout your whole hand, and, if you want, you can go back around the other way.

Tammy Friend ([05:43](#)):

That is outstanding. You know, we would use that sometimes to help alleviate anxiety in the theater class or before going on stage and feeling that anxiety so thank you. Thanks for sharing, Eden.

Angela Millard ([05:56](#)):

What I was surprised to see, too, and I was excited for this... One of our sixth-graders even said that their teacher has been using the hand exercises with them as a whole class to teach them in growing in how to calm themselves and recognize their emotions and how to calm down from that. It's become a whole class at activity in teaching the whole class and how to help with their emotions.

Tammy Friend ([06:21](#)):

Absolutely. That definitely creates that safe and supportive environment too, because you all are on the same page. You feel comfortable. You have a system in place so good things. Did anyone else want to share from Oaklawn? Are y'all good?

Angela Millard ([06:35](#)):

Yes. Anmol wants to share.

Anmol ([06:37](#)):

If you were having Bully-Free Week, we put out bully-free posters and stuff. And one way I used it is that if I saw a bully, I would calm them down and try to be friends with them and talk them out.

Tammy Friend ([06:51](#)):

That is so important. Rather than when someone is a bully, maybe your first reaction is to react back at them, I think is kind of human nature sometimes. But the fact that you were warm and approached them and tried to discuss it in a positive way is definitely more-

Angela Millard ([07:09](#)):

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We brought [crosstalk 00:07:10] in the empathy piece to put yourself not only in the victim's shoes, but also the bully shoes.

Tammy Friend ([07:15](#)):

Absolutely. And at such a young age, I'm very impressed.

Angela Millard ([07:20](#)):

One of the things too, that was mentioned, when we did do Drug-Free Week, we also talked about decisions. These are the decisions to be drug-free. And we did a project where they took pictures together with the title, Drug Free Looks Like Me. And those have been posted around the school, really, up until now. We took it down for Kindness Week, but she said it was really encouraging to go through the hallway and see her picture with her friend and that's a reminder of who I can go to when I need help making decisions, whether it's drugs or anything else in life that she knows who she can rely on. And taking those pictures together is a comforting reminder to her.

Tammy Friend ([07:59](#)):

It is. That's very important. So you have a Bully-Free Week, a Kindness Week, the Drug-Free Week. What other weeks do you have? I'm just curious.

Angela Millard ([08:09](#)):

Well, we have G.U.I.D.E. for Life Week coming up.

Tammy Friend ([08:11](#)):

Yes.

Angela Millard ([08:12](#)):

Yes.

Tammy Friend ([08:13](#)):

Well, thank you for [crosstalk 00:08:14] sharing. Y'all getting so many great ideas. I might have to borrow some in our [crosstalk 00:08:20] next year's celebrations. Well, then, let's hear from Greenbrier Eastside. What's going over there in your area?

Allie ([08:27](#)):

I feel like the G.U.I.D.E. for Life has helped me be able to resolve arguments better, and be able to put myself in their shoes and understand why they may be mad at me or why they may be mad at who knows who.

Tammy Friend ([08:39](#)):

Thank you, Allie. Yes, I agree. Definitely.

Sherry Hogg ([08:41](#)):

I think one of the things that this year in our building... That leadership piece, we've done a great job with goal setting. I think our kids, even kindergarten kids, they're well aware of goals because that's just an everyday piece of our data that we collect. One of the things that I think has really come to light this year is those positive contributions that the kids are wanting to take on themselves. And what I mean by that, there's two groups of kids that have taken on some leadership roles and they have some clubs. So they rotate on that and who leads them. They organize it themselves so they've really taken on a leadership piece and that communication piece. This year, I think we've seen a lot of growth in that area. I think we've kind of taken that and highlighted that to tell them how necessary that is when they become a citizen and adult. That communication piece. That problem solving piece. Then, being able to go down that route and step into the light and be comfortable in that. I think that's been a huge change this year in our building.

Tammy Friend ([09:48](#)):

And you're so right. It's very important for them to have agency, to take ownership of a task and see it through to completion. That is huge. Again, I'm so impressed with seeing it start at such a young age. I think you've got some really good leaders. Thank you, Ms. Hogg, for sharing. What about Greenbrier Westside?

Cassie Page ([10:11](#)):

Speaking of leaders, that's one reason I chose this girl right here. She really takes the G.U.I.D.E. personally. She's very good at interacting with students, taking those lessons to heart and moving them forward. She's very empathetic to those around her, always just guiding them to where they need to be, and is a role model student in the classroom, making sure everyone is partnered up. Always going out of her way for others.

Tammy Friend ([10:36](#)):

Thank you. Andrea, that's good to hear. Did you want to add anything?

Andrea ([10:40](#)):

I think one of my most favorite G.U.I.D.E. for Life lessons were one of our party planning lessons where I had to interact with other people and get other people's perspective.

Cassie Page ([10:52](#)):

She just talked to me a lot about how doing that lesson, got the others in her class that don't normally talk or are shy to really put in their thoughts. She said it was just neat on how she got to see other's views and really take those into consideration before making a decision.

Tammy Friend ([11:11](#)):

Exactly. I just appreciate you all. It's one thing that in passing kind of mention some of these skills and talk briefly, but, clearly, you all are reinforcing these skills and being mindful. Explicitly teaching and having these conversations, which, I think, is what really solidifies the learning, obviously. Rather it be an academic course or the social emotional skills or lessons. Some of you have, have shared kind of what you're currently doing just on a day-to-day basis on campus, which is super exciting. Now, I have appropriately stalked your schools on social media and that's how I selected you, as far as some of your

really creative activities that you did last year. Do y'all have some suggestions either for this coming year or maybe share what you did last year for those listening to get some ideas? Again, I've been taking notes from you all. You do some good things every day. Cedarville High School, do y'all want to start?

Courtney Cochran ([12:11](#)):

Last year, I saw a G.U.I.D.E. for Life Challenge or one of the suggestions was to make and share a playlist that had the themes of growth, understanding, interaction, decision, and empathy. So I got together with some students and my own children and I love Spotify because, I'm not getting paid, I promise, you can make playlists collaborative and everybody can add in their own songs. That was really fun. And then we played the songs at lunchtime. That's something we love to do is to play music at lunch for the students. And then Miss Gillespie and Seth are going to take that idea and blow it up this year.

Seth ([12:51](#)):

Yeah. We did a lot of fun things last year like the thing at lunch, or we had like a big Bingo board of kind things to do and when you got it filled up, you got whatever. I think we focused a lot on students interacting with each other. Especially these two taught me my role as a peer and how I have a lot of power to influence my other peers as their peer. Because when a teacher is telling you be kind, do whatever, it's like, oh, okay. But when you show them an example of what being kind looks like, it's a lot easier to get it, you know?

Tammy Friend ([13:23](#)):

I could not agree more. I used to always tell my students use your power for good. These kids that were so vibrant and everybody liked them and I said, "Use it for good." You have no idea. I love to hear that, Seth. I love to hear that.

Ashleigh Gillespie ([13:39](#)):

One of the ideas we have this year, we're going to keep our playlist and grow our playlist even more, but we're going to really focus on ourselves and knowing ourselves and each other. We're actually working together to create a G.U.I.D.E. for Life book list suggestion. And we're super pumped about that. We have a big group of readers here that [crosstalk 00:14:03]

Tammy Friend ([14:04](#)):

Love that idea, Miss Gillespie. That's great. I can't wait to see that because, like I said, I love your playlist. I was like, "These are good. These are good." Okay. Oaklawn Stem, what you got for us? You can share what you did last year. I know there was some door decorating and bulletin boards that some classes took on, which were super cute.

Angela Millard ([14:25](#)):

Yes. We plan to do that again and announce each competency over the intercom again and just expanding it across all of the subjects, including East and Art and Music and having it be a school-wide project for the different components and the different areas our students are interested in and how they can express themselves through that.

Tammy Friend ([14:49](#)):

I love that. Because those are the types of experiences that's going to stick with them when you can embed some of these life skills into the content areas, because they really are tied to academics. You know the saying, the kids have to have their basic needs met before any learning can occur. Okay, Greenbrier Eastside.

Mandi Dunlap ([15:13](#)):

One thing that took off this year at Eastside was our blessing box, and we used it during Kindness Week. Ms. Hogg had kids go out and kind of restock it. Kids brought items in, and it is basically anything that you would need for the community. So there're diapers in there, deodorant, shampoo and people in the community can get from the box and then they can refill it as well. Our kids have been super active in helping out with that. It goes back to the leadership piece Miss Hogg talked about so we're going to continue, of course, to highlight that during our G.U.I.D.E. for Life Week so kids can see how to give back. I talked to the teachers this year about a lot of times we ask the community for help, but how are we giving back to the community? So our kids have kind of taken that to heart, even on Valentine's Day yesterday, our fifth-graders made some little Valentines for the nursing home. So that's just been something and we're going to continue to add to that.

Tammy Friend ([16:09](#)):

I love it. We are really and truly nurturing leaders. And, by the way, the blessing box. Where is it? Is it outside the school?

Mandi Dunlap ([16:19](#)):

Yeah, it is on our campus. And it's actually right beside our-

Sherry Hogg ([16:22](#)):

Yeah. I was going to say [crosstalk 00:16:27] our produce stand.

Mandi Dunlap ([16:26](#)):

We have a community garden. So we have a produce stand and then we have our blessing box.

Sherry Hogg ([16:32](#)):

We have a teacher that has been very active in that, and she's kind of taken that role on and then a man from our community that comes and helps her out. Then we've extended that into a program we have for our after-school kids. Then they kind of help take care of the garden and pick and they get to take home produce so that's kind of a life skill that we're kind of showing them. And a lot of kids have started their own gardens at home. We're really excited for that. And then the blessing box was kind of the brainchild of one of our teachers that kind of took that on and she wanted to bring that to our school. And then our TAG Program has kind of blown that up too. So I think everything that we've done, it's been done together. It's started an idea and then everybody's just kind of jumped on and been excited about it and grown it.

Tammy Friend ([17:25](#)):

I love it. You know, when the students are going home and wanting to implement what you all have modeled, that is really saying something. Thank you for sharing. Okay, Greenbrier Westside.

Cassie Page ([17:36](#)):

Last year, for the G.U.I.D.E. for Life Week, every day had a different letter that we celebrated. Monday was G. Tuesday was U. Then we went on and we celebrated that letter each day. We watched videos during lunch to talk about what that particular letter meant for the day. We did social media posts. We also got videos from our community members and showed those during our morning news and they just talked about letter her day as well. This year, we celebrated Kindness Week. Our ambassadors came through and led that and came up with ideas and things to celebrate that. And then our TAG students helped with Christmas backpacks this year. They did a school-wide food drive for us and toys and things for students in need, where they had toys at Christmas. They had food at Christmas and not just Christmas gifts that they needed. It was things that they would want to do over Christmas break.

Tammy Friend ([18:43](#)):

That is so important. So are there any final thoughts that you want to share?

Courtney Cochran ([18:47](#)):

I just want to thank you for doing this and for sharing all of the good work that's going on across the state. I'm really excited to see what the G.U.I.D.E. for Life does for the students in Arkansas.

Tammy Friend ([18:59](#)):

Thank you, Ms. Cochran. Thank you.

Angela Millard ([19:01](#)):

I definitely agree with that too. Before last year, I would use this as a guide for my lessons, but through the encouragement of the Vice Principal, I started telling students, "Here's where it fits in to our overall plan for you with G.U.I.D.E. for Life" and connecting the lessons with the specific competencies. It has connected for them so much better than before. So I think there's so much value in showing them where it fits in and I think that it has helped them take it to a higher level for themselves.

Tammy Friend ([19:40](#)):

Absolutely. And the research, Castle, you may be familiar with Castle, but it's an acronym that stands for the collaborative for academic, social, and emotional learning. And they've done all kinds of research and the data does support exactly what you are saying, Ms. Millard, as far as if you can connect it to their lived experiences. Even math, science, whatever, English. It was a little bit easier for me to connect those things in the classroom through literature and those just kind of lend themselves naturally to having these conversations and these lessons. But when you can connect to the specific discipline, it does make it more meaningful and will stay with them for years to come so it's important work. Really the data shows, this is really the starting point. This is kind of our why. And if we can instill these lessons and go from there, then we are making progress. Not just developing educated individuals, but good citizens.

Mandi Dunlap ([20:41](#)):

Ms. Tammy, I wanted to add we haven't said anything about COVID on here, but it still truly impacts the students and the staff. One thing we noticed when we came into this school year, just because kids normally would've had lots of social interactions prior to coming to kindergarten, and most of these kids

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did not. Their parents were doing the right thing, keeping them safe, and so when they arrived, there was a lot of social skills that just had not been developed.

Mandi Dunlap ([21:08](#)):

The G.U.I.D.E. for Life really helped us out with the interaction piece and the building relationships. Ms. Hogg did a lot of work, my Assistant Principal, and the kindergarten teachers did a lot of work about even just how to read social cues on faces, like facial expressions, all that stuff. I would encourage any district out there really struggling with any kind of behavior to really look into the G.U.I.D.E. for Life, because there's a lot of pieces in there that we can equip kids with just by realizing they haven't had these social interactions that kids coming before COVID had. I just wanted to offer that.

Tammy Friend ([21:46](#)):

Thank you for bringing that up. Yes, Ms. Dunlap. Thank you for bringing that up. That's so true. Well, thank you all for joining me again. I so appreciate your time and your insight and your great ideas. And I hope you have a wonderful G.U.I.D.E. for Life week. Remember, again, to use the #arguideforlife, and, honestly, I don't think it matters which parts are capitalized and not just all run together. #arguideforlife. And I look forward to seeing all the creative things you do and the amazing impact you have on your students and your peers this year.

Speaker 1 ([22:23](#)):

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