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30-Day Thread Weaves into a Staff Support System

In August 2019, Superintendent Dr. Kimberly Berman, inspired by a [Ted Talks video from Matt Cutts](#), motivated the entire Mill Valley School District staff to participate in “30-Day Challenges” throughout the 2019-20 school year, with the intent of making small intentions into powerful changes every day.

To get the ball rolling, Dr. Berman guided the staff with ideas and suggestions, including a green challenge, a writing challenge, a learn something new challenge, and a gratitude challenge. It was this last idea that touched Mill Valley Middle School teachers Maggie Front, Brandolyn Patterson, Jonna Palmer, and Sarah Petrini, who together began a group gratitude text thread, with the agreement that they would each post three things they were grateful for, every day, for the next 30 days.

By their own accord, the group were not close friends when the challenge started - they all teach different subjects, and different grade levels - but they soon found that participating in this thread was creating a strong bond between them, and was becoming a powerful way to stay connected. Initially, they counted the days just to achieve their 30 day goal, however after the first month, they discovered that they all looked forward to the daily thread, so reassessed their target - could they reach 50 days, 100 days or could they continue for the entire school year?

History and Social Sciences teacher, Maggie Front said, “The more connected we felt, the more we thought about what to post, and the more we felt like sharing. Even when we did not see each other in person, especially during distance learning, or for those days when it was just a struggle to see something positive, it made us feel more compassionate, stronger, and more grateful. It has been such an unexpected gift to get to know these incredible people”.



Brandolyn Patterson, a MS math teacher, who spoke on behalf of the group, added, “We’ve gained much more than support or empathy for colleagues; we have become friends for life. There were days we struggled, and days when it came easy, but this has helped us weather the storms at school, and in our personal lives”.

Fast forward to May 13, 2022, **1001 days later**, you will find these four driven and dedicated Middle School staff continuing the challenge they started together two and a half years ago. When asked what the biggest take away from this seemingly simple idea has been, they responded “We all feel we are just happier people than we were when we started this 1000 days ago”.