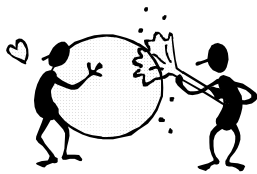


# Valley Forge Elementary—April 2014—Team Updates

## Kindergarten:

Spring finally feels like it arrived during April. Our theme, Protect our Planet, allowed us to focus on rain, trees, flowers, and of course, Earth Day! The children decorated the hallway with umbrellas and wrote about what they like to do in the rain. We read various fiction and nonfiction books related to our theme.

In math, we learned how to “count on” in order to answer the question “How many more do we need?”. The students practiced this skill using a number line, their fingers, and 20-frame paddles.



Our highlight this month was our Earth Day celebration on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. With our parent volunteers, we spent the day learning about various topics that are relevant to helping take care of our Earth. We planted flowers in front of the school sign. We learned about recycling through games. We learned about how an oil spill affects our environment and how difficult it is to clean up. We learned about our deep-down underground friends, the worms, and how they are so helpful to our gardens. We decorated pots which will be used later in the school year to help beautify Valley Forge Elementary School. It was a fabulous day and we thank all the parents who were able to help out.

## First Grade:

In April as the weather brought us brighter and warmer days, the school playground became a very busy place. As a result of the jump rope assembly, the kids are having fun practicing the jump rope tricks during our recess. The assembly was the perfect way to get the kids excited for our April service project, Jump Rope For Heart. The kids and teachers had a great time raising money while jumping rope in the gym on one Thursday morning. In addition to jumping rope, recess laps have started! Many children enjoy this activity during our recess times. Thanks to the parents who have volunteered to help make this possible and to Mr. Johnson for his dedication to fitness.



If you haven't visited our rainforest hallway lately, we have added ants, spiders, and butterflies. Prior to Spring Break, we officially finished our unit on the rainforest with a rainforest tasting. The kids had a chance to taste and see products of the rainforest. Thanks to the parents who helped us cut up the fruit and prepare for such a fun activity. Also, thanks to Mrs. Guy who presented a fabulous lesson on the products. The children had a great time seeing all of the wonderful things the rainforest gives us. Upon our return from Spring Break, the students learned all about Earth Day as we began our new Science unit on Green Efforts. We will spend the next few weeks learning about the importance of being "green".

Through our Social Studies unit on Africa, we are experiencing different pieces of literature that help the children experience African culture. While reading different books, the students spend time discussing the setting, characters, main idea, and author's style.

At the end of the month, we had a wonderful concert for families and friends. Our 1<sup>st</sup> graders did a great job singing songs from Africa and Japan. Thanks to Mrs. Janser for her hard work in teaching the children so many interesting songs!

As we end this month, we are reminded that "April showers bring May flowers". MAY our showers be few and our flowers many!

## Second Grade:



Second Grade has been enjoying the warmer, sunnier days of April! Opening our compost bin was a great way to end our study of soils. The worms had done their work! We looked back at our science journals to compare what the bin looked like at the start of our science unit and compared that to what it looked like now. This lesson was connected to Earth Day lessons as the Styrofoam was the only material not recycled into the soil. Other Earth Day activities included reading *The Wump World* by Bill Peet, creating posters encouraging recycling, reducing, and reusing, and Earth

Day acrostics. We have now left earth and have blasted off to the solar system.

In Social Studies, our study of the exploration of North America is concluding with activities about Columbus. We connected Social Studies to Language Arts with a persuasive letter from potential crew members hoping for jobs on board one of the admiral's ships. Students will also have the opportunity to create a Columbus verb poem.

Learning the parts of speech is an on-going part of the second grade Language Arts curriculum. Students recently created a parts of speech flower garden with each part of the flower representing nouns, adjectives, and verbs. They are blooming beautifully in our hallway along with spring paragraphs and spring poetry. We are looking forward to the beautiful, busy month of May! Our field trip to the Keswick theater, music program, and field day will all be exciting events!

## Third Grade:

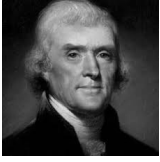
April was a fun month for VFE 3<sup>rd</sup> graders! We finished our Chemical Testing Unit in science by finding out what our five mystery chemicals were. Our students did a great job with this unit and had a blast learning about chemicals! We are now transitioning into our final unit, Plant Growth and Development. Students will be watching the entire life cycle of a Wisconsin Fast Plant, a seed that grows and wilts within a one month period. It is very exciting for our students and a great way to welcome in Spring!



April has also had our students busy practicing for their Famous Pennsylvanian speeches which will be given on Thursday, May 1st! All 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students researched a famous Pennsylvanian of their choice in our school library. They then wrote speeches at home that will be shared in front of parents and peers at school. The students are very excited about this extension project and we, as a school, are excited to see our students give their speeches!

April has also been National Poetry Month. Students have done many exciting activities in their classrooms reading and writing poetry. It is always a fun month and a great way to connect poetry with the theme units we study in class.

Third grade is excited for May as we have the Bee Man assembly coming on May 15<sup>th</sup> and Field Day on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. We look forward to another great month of learning and exciting events!



We started the month of April with Art Goes to School. We would like to thank the Cultural Arts Committee for sponsoring and coordinating this wonderful event. We would also like to thank the PTO and the Cultural Arts Committee for having Thomas Jefferson come to visit the fourth grade. Thomas Jefferson gave us the inside scoop about how he was picked to write the Declaration of Independence and about the impact he made on our young and growing country.

Thanks also goes to the Conestoga High School students from REACH (Responsible, Educated Adolescents Can Help) for coming over and visiting. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade students learned from their skits and had a great time interacting with the high school students while writing letters to those going to the Senior Prom.

The field trip to Valley Forge National was a huge success and we want to thank Mrs. Narcisi. We toured the park and visited the museum, the train station, and General Washington's Headquarters. We experienced what life was like during the winter at Valley Forge.

The PTO did another wonderful job on the Ice Cream Social. The fourth grade students had all their P.A.L. projects on display for everyone to enjoy. The culminating activities for Electric Circuits from Science were also on display for everyone to enjoy. The students worked in teams to build and wire "buildings" for light and the teams really showed their creativity and ingenuity with each of the "buildings". We hope everyone who visited our hallway during the Ice Cream Social had a fun and educational experience.



## Special & Support Area Updates

### Art



**Kindergarten** - Kindergarten art students have been looking at textures in art. We made clay frames and medallions which will be glazed.

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade** - First grade classes made a layered painting based on the artwork of French artist, Henri Rousseau. They applied their knowledge of the rainforest to create a wildlife scene. We also just created pinch pot clay frogs. They finished learning about the art of Claude Monet and as a class we read, *Froggy Love in Monet's Garden* as a tie-in to our Monet studies as well as their explanation of frogs in science class!

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade** - Second grade classes made nautical scenes while thinking about what they have learned about world explorers. After sketching and outlining details of our sailing ships, we painted with watercolors. We are just starting a unit on space. Look for their beautiful space collages coming home in the next few weeks.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**- Third grade students are working on a mural painting based on the artwork of PA artist, Edward Hicks, entitled *Peaceable Kingdom*. In his paintings, animals that would never be close to each other in nature are resting comfortably next to each other. In the middle ground of the painting, you can see William Penn making peace with the natives of our area. Students made their own peaceful painting on a circle template (Tondo), filling the land with peaceful people and animals.

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade** - Fourth classes made circular American flags after learning about American artist, Jasper Johns, and his flag paintings. Using red, white, blue, gold, and silver, we played with pattern and symbols to come up with a new design. We are also working on yummy dessert drawings inspired by Wayne Thiebaud. Our 4<sup>th</sup> graders are so excited (or shall we say "wild"?) to finish the mural for the PTO Spring Fair sponge toss game. Hope to see you all there!

