

Valley Forge Elementary—January 2015

Kindergarten:



The kindergarten classrooms had a dreamy January with our Sweet Dreams theme. The children listened to many stories related to this theme. We made "Dream Pillows" which involved each student drawing a picture of something that would help them have happy dreams. Then parents helped us iron these pictures onto a pillow case. The children were amazed by the outcome and have reported having very happy dreams!

With the wonderful snow we had, it was only fitting to weave in snowmen and mittens to our daily activities. The children created their own snowman and practiced writing complete sentences to describe their snowman.

In Social Studies, we listened to the story "Martin's Big Words" and put together a book to learn more about Martin Luther King.

In math, we began learning about time to the nearest hour. We are looking forward to kindergarten math night in February.

We learned about animal coverings in Science as well as motion. Our little scientists explored different types of animal coverings and guessed which animal it may have come from. Using an incline we tested how things move. Do they roll, slide or do both?

In preparation for our trip to the Eastern University planetarium we learned about the sun, moon, and constellations. Finally, we completed our formal activities related to each letter of the alphabet.

First Grade:

Happy New Year! First grade started off 2015 by making New Year resolutions. A new year is a great time to establish better habits in school and at home.



In January, our first graders completed an author study on Jan Brett. The children enjoyed listening to many of her books. After we read each book, we talked about the story elements and compared them to other Jan Brett books. We also learned about Jan Brett's life and the inspirations for her books and her illustrations. Be sure to ask your child about his/her favorite Jan Brett book. Next time you are at the library, see if you can find a book we didn't read in class.

In Science, the first grade studied magnets for the month of January. The children explored with magnets and discovered amazing magnetic facts. Our Social Studies unit on Japan is coming to a close. The children are sad to see it almost over but are very excited for our next trip to Africa. In reading, our first graders are learning how to Monitor and Clarify as they read and use "Fix-Up" strategies to help decode text that is difficult to read. They are becoming readers who can use the strategies they have learned independently...it is so exciting!

First graders love birthdays! In January, we celebrated the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. by reading books and writing our own dreams for our world. First graders may be small but their dreams are big!

Thus far, Mother Nature has been pretty kind to us...what a difference from last year. Although we've had a few delayed openings and early dismissals, the snow totals have been minimal. Please keep in mind that when the temperatures allow, we head outside for some fresh air and exercise. Your child must have a hat, gloves, waterproof snow pants, and boots to play in the snow at lunch recess. They also must have a change of shoes for the classroom.

February will continue to bring a LOVE of learning! We look forward to a great 2015 with our first graders!

Second Grade:

Second graders seemed excited to return from Winter Break for a month filled with many interesting lessons and activities. We began the month writing New Year's resolutions. Later in the month, we studied the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior. After learning of his dreams for the world, second graders wrote about their own dreams for the future. The teachers were impressed with how thoughtful the students' ideas were.

The wintery weather has provided lots of inspiration for our winter acrostics, paragraphs and rebus stories. The hallways are filled with creative writing.

We are completing our Changes unit in science. Two favorite activities this month were separating colors and conducting tests to discover a "mystery" mixture! Ask a second grader to explain the words dissolve, settle, mixture, and solution.

In math, students have been working on the topics of multiplication/division and measurement.



Our study of ancient China is coming to an end and will culminate with our Chinese Round Robin provided by the PTO. Students will experience paper cutting, painting, and martial arts. They will learn about the history of rice and how it is grown. Then they will enjoy tasting rice using chopsticks. Thank you to our generous PTO and the volunteers who make this exciting morning possible!

We will be glad when warmer weather returns but in the meantime, we have so much to keep us busy! We are looking forward to many fun Valentine's Day projects!

Third Grade:

Third graders were eager to return from winter break and get back into their daily routines and fun activities! Our grade had a special assembly with Betsy Ross to learn about our nation's flag and Pennsylvania's rich history. Third grade has also been busy continuing their Social Studies unit on Native Americans as well as their science unit, Land and Water. They have been working hard in their reading themes and various math units. The students have also been practicing how to read with a close eye using a close reading technique.

During the month, each class was visited by our dental hygienist who taught them proper dental hygiene. The third grade was also visited by representatives from the John James Audubon Center with whom we share an educational partnership. Each class was treated to a bird drawing lesson, specifically of the woodpecker, and learned about how John James Audubon accurately depicted birds in his drawings. Students are currently sketching their own bird drawings that will later be on display at the Audubon Sap Sucker Festival and then used in a fund-raising auction!



Third grade is very much looking forward to the month of February and all the fun and exciting activities it will bring!

Fourth Grade:



The month of January went by very fast and we had many wonderful learning experiences. When you walk down the halls of the Fourth Grade, please take time to read the “Gifts that Money Can’t Buy” that were written by the students. We also have “snow flakes” falling to the ground with wonderful poetry written on them. There are also goals for the New Year and our most memorable times of 2014.

We started a new unit in science and we are learning about how electric circuits work, how electricity is produced, how to be safe when dealing with electricity, and how to conserve electricity.

The Fourth Grade would like to thank the PTO and the Cultural Arts Committee for having Kit’s Interactive Theater visit us. We had a great time being part of the performance and learning many new and interesting facts regarding the causes of the American Revolutionary War.



Special & Support Area Updates

Physical Education

We have been very busy in Physical Education! **Kindergarteners** continue to work on spatial awareness, locomotor skills, more advanced ball skills, and started non-locomotor skills. **First and second** graders have been working on dribbling, jump rope, dance, teamwork, cooperation, and more game strategies. Students in **third and fourth** grade continue to work on jump rope, dance, fitness exercises, teamwork, cooperation, social skills/responsibilities, and more advanced game concepts. **All** parents are encourage to play games with their children that involve throwing, catching, dribbling, and kicking a variety of balls.



Students have been doing a wonderful job of remembering their sneakers but just as a reminder - please don't forget to send your child to school with sneakers on PE days so that they can participate. Please remember "Ugg" type shoes and winter boots can not be accepted for PE class. **For safety reasons, students need to wear sneakers that can be laced up or velcroed.**

Save the Date: **Field Day** is fast approaching! Field Day "A" (**1st and 2nd Grade**) is scheduled for **Thursday, May 21st**. Field Day "B" (**3rd and 4th Grade**) is scheduled for **Friday, May, 22nd**. Last year went so well, we will be asking for parent volunteers again to help at various times of the day! The rain date for either of those days will be **Friday, May, 29th**. Please mark your calendars and be ready to have tons of fun in the sun!!

