



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

January 2012–Team Updates

Kindergarten:

Sweet Dreams was our theme for January! We began by listening to lots of bedtime stories and even created our very own *Dream Pillow* after reading a book about friendship called *The Dream Pillow* by Mitra Modarressi. We hope everyone is having sweet dreams this winter! During this time we also learned about Dr. Martin Luther King's dream he had for his children and country. We also learned lots about the nighttime sky and our solar system. The kindergartners LOVED their first field trip to Eastern University's Planetarium. They were so excited to see the different planets and constellations inside the planetarium. Each child also had the opportunity to view the sun through an enormous telescope in the observatory! It was a wonderful experience for all! In math we began an introduction to telling time using analog and digital clocks. Mrs. Bove and the kindergartners have been working diligently since December practicing songs and motions for our Valentine Musical in February. We can't wait to perform our songs about our country, friendship, money and planets for our families!

First Grade:

Happy New Year! Our first grade started 2012 with a Japanese Round Robin. Every first grader had the chance to visit each first grade teacher to learn various lessons about Japan. At the end of the day, the children participated in a Japanese Tea Ceremony. The children enjoyed tasting Green Tea and cookies while they learned about the customs and traditions that are involved in the tea ceremony. We are finishing our unit on Japan and look forward to our next adventure in 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! Our science unit on the Rainforest is well under way. At the end of January, we were visited by the Philadelphia Zoo for a "Zoo on Wheels" presentation. The children learned about animals of the rainforest as they visited with the animals the zookeeper brought. We thank the PTO for this fabulous Cultural Arts program. The children loved being able to see real live animals in school. Our biggest event in January was our Rainforest mural. The children (with the help of a few parents) created beautiful murals for our hallway. Please be sure to visit our Tropical Rainforest often. As the children learn about the different forms of life, we will be adding projects to our display. It is an amazing unit that is loved by all!

Second Grade:

Thank you to Michelle Rossi and all of the many volunteers who made the Chinese Round Robin such an interesting and exciting event for our students! Second graders were treated to paper cutting with the amazing Mr. Cheng, leaving with a special souvenir created just for them. They experienced calligraphy and bamboo painting with Mrs. Gu, and karate lessons with two professional instructors. Our Mrs. Paczesniak shared a bit of her history and culture in her presentation on China's most important agricultural product, rice. Students practiced using chopsticks to eat the tasty treat cooked by volunteers. We all enjoyed the book *Silk Peony*, a story of a Chinese New Year parade dragon. We even had a visit from the dragon herself during the story! It was a memorable time, thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Rossi and all the many volunteers. Our next Social Studies unit is a study of the exploration of North America. In January, children wrote winter Acrostics and Cinquains. Come visit the second grade hallway and read their creative pieces. We will soon be presenting lessons from the Go Green unit in science. Look for information about an exciting event coming in February related to this study! Also in February, students will present their first Book Shares. Happy Valentine's Day from the second grade teachers!

Third Grade:

January has been a very fun month for third graders here at VFES! This month we had a visit from the John James Audubon Center. As part of our ongoing partnership the Audubon Center came and presented a lesson about John James and described his passion for drawing birds. Children then created their own bird drawings. These drawings will be displayed during the month of March at the Audubon Center as a kick off to their "Maple Sugar Festival" held every year. More information will be sent home as March approaches.

Third grade also enjoyed our annual Betsy Ross assembly. Children learned about our flag's history and how our flag transformed into what it is today. This assembly helped kick off our social studies unit on "Famous Pennsylvanians." All third grade students will be spending the month of February researching a famous Pennsylvanian of their choice and getting a presentation ready. Then, on February 23rd, children will dress up and present their information in front of their classmates and parents. Parents will be invited in on February 23rd at 2:15 p.m. to listen to speeches and see their child's class all dressed up!

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 narrative stories that the students wrote about their "snow people," and what they believed the "snow people" did at night. We also have "snow flakes" falling to the ground with wonderful poetry written on them. We started a new unit in science. 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 also 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 her 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, loco motor skills, more advanced ball skills, and started non-loco motor skills. **First and second** graders have been working on fitness, dribbling, passing, shooting baskets, volleying, moving to open space and more game strategies. Students in **third and fourth** grade continue to work on fitness exercises, volleyball skills, teamwork, cooperation, basketball lead up games, social skills/responsibilities and more advanced game concepts. Some upcoming units will include dance, jump rope, long handled stick games and gymnastics. All parents are encouraged to play games with their children that involve throwing, catching, dribbling and kicking a variety of balls.

The 5th Annual Sports Equipment Drive in January has been a great success! We are very close to reaching our goal of 200 pieces of sports equipment to donate to John Paul Jones Middle School in Philadelphia. Their PE teachers are very excited for all the types and amount of equipment we are bringing to them. **Your donations are greatly appreciated.**



February Events

- 2/1 Kindergarten Pancake Day
Kindergarten Registration
PTO Board Meeting
- 2/2 2nd Grade Star Program
1st Grade Dental Hygienist
Kindergarten Registration
- 2/3 1st Grade 100 Day Activities
1st Grade Dental Hygienist
PTO Pizza Bingo
- 2/10 Kindergarten Valentine's Musical
- 2/13–2/16 Art Goes to School
- 2/14 Valentine's Day
- 2/20 No School
- 2/21 1st Grade Black History Month Round Robin
- 2/22 2nd Grade Toy Exchange
- 2/23 3rd Grade Famous Pennsylvanians
- 2/29 2nd Grade Bake Sale
- 2/28– Parent Teacher Conf
No Kindergarten
1/2 day Grades 1-4
PTO Bowling Party
Kindergarten Bake Sale
- 2/29– Parent Teacher Conf
No Kindergarten
1/2 day Grades 1-4
2nd Grade Bake Sale

