



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

May-June 2011-12-Team Updates

Kindergarten:

During the month of May the kindergarten learned all about insects. We read a variety of books and worked on many fun projects. We had the opportunity to observe the changes that a ladybug and butterfly go through before they become the adult insect. It was fun leaving the insects free out in our courtyard! We enjoyed a full day at the Elmwood Park Zoo as a follow up to our study of habitats.

We continued with addition and subtraction stories as well as an introduction to fractions. The month of June brought a short study of the pond and ocean and all the interesting creatures that live in and around each habitat.

The children are looking forward to a fun summer and an exciting year in First Grade – we wish them the best! Happy Summer!

The Kindergarten Teachers

First Grade:

The first grade teachers are winding up the year with many end of the year memories. For the month of May, we have been learning about organisms in Science. The kids had a great time observing the living creatures. We have created habitats for in our classrooms. The children made woodland terrariums for millipedes, pill bugs and Bess beetles. We also constructed aquariums and added pond snails and guppies. Some guppies have even had babies while in the classroom. What an exciting unit! We are finishing our study of Africa in Social Studies. The children have enjoyed their visit and look forward to their "arrival" back in the States.

Our first year with our new reading series (Literacy By Design) is finished and the teachers are very proud of all that our readers have learned! Please remember to read over the summer to allow for opportunities to practice the newly developed reading skills.

Our seven school days in June were full of activities and learning. We started off the month with a fabulous field trip to the Philadelphia Zoo. The children had a great day exploring the grounds and visiting the amazing animals we learned about in first grade.

We also had a Spirit Week to raise money for the American Cancer Society. Beach Day and Teddy Bear Picnic added to the year end activities. Our end of the year was full of so many activities, the children couldn't wait to see what activity was planned for the next day. Our end of the year parties were full of good times and great memories as we bid farewell to our wonderful year. The first grade teachers would like to thank all of our wonderful families and students for such a great year. Have a happy and safe summer. See you in September!!!

Second Grade:

May and June have been filled with many exciting events in second grade! A representative from Tredyffrin Library presented their summer reading program to our students. We are hoping many second graders will participate in this program. Reading over the summer will help reinforce acquired reading skills so students can begin third grade with those skills intact. Teachers and students enjoyed the trip to the Keswick Theater to see a production of Ramona Quimby. However,

I'm sure if you asked your student, each and every one would tell you that the favorite day by far was Field Day! Thanks to Mr. Johnson and all the parent volunteers, we all had a wonderful time! The popsicles were a delicious treat. Thank you to the PTO. That afternoon, at the Food Fair, third and fourth graders did a fantastic job presenting healthy foods to second graders. Many students tried new healthy foods for the first time.

One of the second grade teachers' favorite activities of the entire year are the Writers' Teas. The Teas celebrate our students' hard work and creativity in the planning, drafting, revising, proofreading, and publishing writing pieces during their second grade year. We are so proud of the growth all of the children have shown in their writing.

We ended our science units with the study of the life cycle of butterflies. We observed our caterpillars as they progressed through the stages of metamorphosis. Along the way, our children learned the parts of the caterpillar's body, what they eat, how long it takes for the caterpillar to emerge from the chrysalis, and the butterfly's body parts. On a warm spring day, we released our Painted Lady butterflies so they could begin the life cycle again.

The last Social Studies unit is the history of flight. We have read biographies of the Wright brothers, Charles Lindberg, and Amelia Earhart. Our final lessons will be about the "space race", culminating with the moon landing. What fascinating lessons with which to end the year! The second grade teachers would like to thank all of our parents for their help and support this year. We feel very fortunate to work with such wonderful families here at Valley Forge. We wish you all a happy, restful, healthy summer. September will be here again before we know it!

Third Grade:

May has been a very exciting and busy month in third grade. All students were very excited for the annual Spring Fair that was held in the beginning of the month! Thank you to the PTO for putting together such a fun night for the students!

On May 9th the Bee Man came to visit V.F.E. This exciting assembly, organized by the PTO, tied in learning about pollination with our plant growth and development unit. The students had a great time and really learned so much from the program!

Third grade also had the pleasure of listening to David Kim from the Philadelphia Orchestra perform in the Large Group Room. Students got to learn about his background and ask him personal questions about his life. This program was very exciting for our students.

At the end of May students also had the opportunity to visit Pennsbury Manor, the home of William Penn. This field trip was a great connection to our Social Studies unit on William Penn and Pennsylvania. Highlights included learning about and practicing daily chores from William Penn's time, creating medicine bags and writing with feather pens! The students had a great time on this educational trip.

The beautiful month of May went by very quickly, and we had many wonderful learning experiences. We would like to first thank Mrs. Bove for her hard work and great job she and the students did during the Spring Concert, and Lewis and Clark presentation.

We had a great time at Valley Forge Middle School for the 4th Grade Move-Up day. The current 4th graders were fortunate to have fantastic guides from the Gold Team who showed the future 5th graders the lay of the land. We would also like to thank Mr. Gibson, the other administrators, and the staff for their hard work and outstanding presentation.

The next person we would like to thank is Mrs. Sullivan for coordinating the visit from Ms. Newman from Tredyffrin Public Library. Ms. Newman read a fascinating story and told us all the great events the public library has during the summer break.

The Conestoga Relays went off without one dropped baton, and all the students did a great job running their races. We would like to thank all the staff and interns that helped with this event. The students would not be able to shine as brightly without the help of all the volunteers who made this event a huge success.

The culminating event for the month was Field Day, and we want to give a huge thank you to all the parent volunteers, interns, and Mr. Johnson. Everyone appreciated the hard work by all who helped make the 3rd and 4th graders have fun during Field Day. We also need to thank the Team Leaders from Trader Joe's® who brought us the food samples for our Healthy Food Fair. The poster we made for the 1st and 2nd graders for their Food Fair will be hanging in the Trader Joe's® store for everyone to see.

The month of June was short, but we had some fun, and we learned so much. We want to start by saying thank you to Ms. Carathanassis for coordinating the historical walking tour of Philadelphia. The wonderful tour guides walked us around to the many historical sites and told us about many facts regarding these famous people and places.

Mr. Johnson was busier than usual over the last two months, and we want to thank him and the parent volunteers who helped with the American Cancer Society Relay for Life® events that we ran from June 6th through the 9th. The activities helped us raise awareness of this terrible illness, and we celebrated the survivors.

The 4th Grade Team, and Mr. Johnson put on a great talent contest, and everyone had a wonderful time. We want to thank all the students who participated and the parent(s) who came to enjoy the show.

The 4th Grade End of Year party was a splashing success, and it could not have been done without all the help from the parent volunteers who worked very hard coordinating the party and running the entire event. The 4th Grade Team and all the students thank you for the fantastic party.

Special & Support Area Updates

Physical Education

The end of the year is always the most exciting around Physical Education. Students finished working on handball activities and were given the opportunity to improve on their throwing, catching and moving to open space. Handball enabled students to practice skills and concepts that are used in many sports, such as moving to open space, communication, teamwork, offense, defense winning and losing. After handball, students in all grades learned concepts and skills revolved around diamond sports, such as kickball, softball and baseball. All students in 1st through 4th grade participated in their Field Days. The weather cooperated and they all had a wonderful day together working as teams and encouraging one another. The 4th graders were able to get their first feel being a track and field athlete when they participated in the Conestoga Relays. Everyone who signed up practiced handoffs and did a great job in front of the hundreds of other parents and students. Students were also given the opportunity to participate in a Fitness Program during recess. Students walked, jogged or ran on a mapped out course and parent volunteers tracked the distance for the students. The students traveled **2,763 miles** and made it all the way from Valley Forge Elementary School to **California** in just one month! Thank you so much to the parent volunteers that dedicated their time and encouragement to our students as they participated.

Special & Support Area Updates (continued)

Music

“Music is the universal language of mankind” was written by Longfellow. In May and June, we were learning about expressive qualities: tempo and dynamics. We were also reviewing rhythm, melody, form, harmony and style.

Kindergarten sang songs about school and about May and June. We explored the melodic instruments by performing ostinato patterns. We learned the whole song of Do Re Mi – an international language sung by children all over the world.

First grade presented a program in May performing Spanish songs, songs from Japan and songs from Africa. In class, we have been learning about the Carnival of Animals, singing songs and listening to this great music. Finally the children created sounds on melodic instruments about the various animals.

Second Grade learned about Mozart and Beethoven. They also studied the Peer Gynt Suite by listening and playing parts of musical themes on our melodic instruments. Finally, Second grade was introduced to the violin, viola and cello instruments. In Third Grade, students may learn to play the violin, viola or cello and participate in an orchestra.

Third Grade presented their Pennsylvania Program along with the help of the dedicated third grade teachers in April. They listened to sounds of various woodwind and brass instruments. In Fourth Grade, students may learn to play a string instrument, a woodwind instrument, a brass instrument or a percussion instrument as well as participate in a band or orchestra. Third graders have also been playing their recorders learning how to finger and read B, A, G, and C.

Fourth Grade students presented Lewis and Clark in May. We sang chorus songs in class and reviewed the different elements of music. Third and Fourth Grade Chorus and Orchestra along with the Fourth Grade Band had an outstanding Spring Concert in May. Fourth Grade students in their last weeks of music were presented their CD of their singing voice from Grades K-4. Thanks to all of the volunteers every year who give time to tape the children's singing voices. In grade four the CD's are finalized so the students can take these home.

Many thanks to this year's music volunteers led by Rita Gosnear.

Heather Bittenbender	Karen Seifert
Cindy Borger	Barb Loewengart
Erin Shine	Donna Costin
Jenni DiMaio	Kelly Hutchinson
Natalie Sudall	Raquel Hunter
Julie Morgan	Cathy Barrios
Joann Mayo	Rita Gosnear
Nua Ming	Amanda Ivory
Gail Young	Jose Ibarra
Esther Cho	

I apologize if I have missed anyone who gave their time to help with the music program.

Thanks to a great chorus and band this year! The chorus sang at the Freedoms Foundation Heroes Day program in May. They also sang at Devon Manor in Devon. I have been very lucky to teach such talented students and have the support of the parents. Thanks also to the staff for supporting our music program.

Welcome Mr. Chris Nation to our school. He will be the music teacher next year. He graduated from Penn State University and comes with teaching experience. The kids will love him.

Have a great summer!

Special & Support Area Updates (continued)

Art

Kindergarten artists are working on flower still life paintings inspired by Vincent Van Gogh. We used non-traditional tools to paint textures into our backgrounds to achieve the look of Van Gogh's thick paint.

Some first grade classes learned about French artist, Henri Rousseau, and his paintings of jungle life. We connected his paintings to their studies of the rainforest creating layers of paint and oil pastel. We even used the back of our paintbrushes to scratch through our first layer of paint.

Other classes...created beautiful cherry blossom paintings inspired by the art of Japanese artist Ando Hiroshige. This integrated with their core classroom social studies unit on Japan.

Some classes are exploring ancient Greece by creating our own paper column made with collaged papers. We also made paper amphora vases celebrating a hero in our lives. We used crayon and watercolor to create a terracotta appearance. Other classes ...created seascape paintings inspired by three ships in Christopher Columbus' fleet, the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria.

Some third grade classes are working on perspective drawings. We are using our math and ruler skills to design our dream rooms where the sky was the limit! We reviewed shapes and terms from math class in order to create dimension on a flat plane of paper. Other classes.... Just finished a beautiful patterned bird inspired by the folk art of the PA Dutch distelfinch renderings. Our birds incorporated patterns and were limited to three colors to emphasize the design.

Some fourth grade classes finished an abstract work based on the number series paintings by American artist, Jasper Johns. We layered the day, month, and year of our birth to create a jumbled composition which was then filled with line patterns. Other fourth grade classes... finished a fantasy landscape inspired by the art and illustrations of Dr. Seuss. They used secondary colors and practiced their skills in drawing 3-D shapes. Omitting a vanishing point creates a wonky perspective and gives us that Dr. Seuss feeling!



Events

- 6/1 Kindergarten Orientation
1st Grade Field Trip
to Philadelphia Zoo
- 6/4 4th Grade Field Trip to
Historic Phila
3rd Grade (2 classes)
to Audubon Center
- 6/4–6/8 American Cancer
Society Spirit Week
- 6/5 ACS Hat Day
Move Up Day
Students Grade 1-4
- 6/6 ACS Wear Purple Day
- 6/7 ACS Sunglass Day
3rd Grade (2 classes)
to Audubon Center
Writer's Tea (Hayes,
Palmer & Thaler)
- 6/8 ACS Slipper Day
Writer's Tea (Golen &
Veroneau)
- 6/11 4th Grade Talent Show
Last Day of School for
Kindergarten
- 6/12 Last Day of School
Staff Luncheon
- 6/12–6/15 Staff In-Service

