



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

November 2012–Team Updates

Kindergarten:

As tradition goes in the Valley Forge Kindergarten we started the month of November off with our preparation and celebration of Bear Hunt Day. This is a hands on event where the children learn about Native American culture and traditions. It takes many parent volunteers to run this day and we had one more successful year of Bear Hunt thanks to all the volunteers.

From Bear Hunt Day we moved on to activities related to Thanksgiving. We continued our review of the alphabet and proper formation of letters. In science we completed our farming unit by learning about how cow's milk makes its way to milk in our homes. We concluded the lesson by making our own ice cream yummy!

In math, some of us focused on numbers to 10, some of us focused on ordering by size, length and weight, and some of us worked on counting and ordering numbers to 0 to 10. We loved having our parents come to observe how the kindergarten classrooms work and we hope the parents got a good idea of what we do each day in school!

First Grade:

In November, our first graders spent time learning about the first Thanksgiving and writing thankful stories. In addition to Thanksgiving, we also had many special events in November. We really enjoyed the River Dance Assembly. The children were amazed by the talent and culture the Allegheny River Dancers brought to our school. On Election Day, we had a round robin. During this time, first grade learned about the voting process and then voted in a mock election.

VFE also participated in "Mix It Up" day. At lunch the children were encouraged to sit with someone they didn't know. What a fabulous opportunity to make new friends!

In reading, we have been learning about determining importance. The children are getting very good at deciding what is important in a story and what is not. We completed our unit on Maps and Communities in Social Studies and are preparing for our "trip" to Japan.

We are learning about the weather in Science. The children will have the chance to learn about various weather measuring instruments as well as take home student created models to practice what they have learned. In Math, we are taking a break from adding and subtracting and beginning our study of Geometry. This is a great opportunity to practice addition and subtraction facts at home speed and fluency!

Now that the cold weather has arrived, please remember to send your child to school dressed for outdoor weather. We will go out to recess whenever possible!

Second Grade:

November was a busy month in Second Grade. It began with a Mix It Up activity during one of their lunch periods in the cafeteria. This gave the students an opportunity to meet and talk to other students not in their own classroom. The students enjoyed the chance to sit at different tables and make new friends. The second graders enjoyed the PTO sponsored assembly featuring the Allegheny River Dancers. They shared their culture through many dances. The children even had a chance to get involved in the dances.

In our second grade curriculum this month, the students wrote Thanksgiving Acrostic poems which told what they were thankful for this year. In Social Studies, we have begun studying Ancient China. We began with lessons on the geography and map skills which will help the students understand how that affected its history.

This month in Science, we have finished the Sound unit and are ready to begin the Changes unit. In this unit the students will learn about the states of matter, properties of matter and what causes matter to change from one state to another. There will be many hands on experiments that will be very exciting for the students to be involved in.

The Second grade teachers appreciate all the parents that came to visit on American Education Week. Also, we enjoyed talking with all the parents during the conference days.

Third Grade:

November was a busy month for third grade students here at V.F.E. We kicked off the month with field trips to the John James Audubon Center where students learned about famous Pennsylvanian, John Audubon, and his contributions to the world of science through his bird paintings and drawings. We continued our month of fun events with the PTO sponsored visit by the Allegheny River Dancers. This Native American group introduced our students to their rich culture and traditions through performing their unique style of song and dance. It really was a fun program for the kids.

We continued this month with our whole and small group instruction of Literacy by Design reading series and worked repeatedly with students on comprehension strategies and techniques. In writing, each teacher used the theme of November to have students create holiday pieces.

In science we wrapped up our rocks and minerals unit and began our land and water unit. Students are doing experiments to see the effects rain and water have on soil run-off and how rivers and streams are formed.

In social studies we are studying Native Americans. Each class is studying a specific tribe and will then have a round robin activity where students from each class teach about what they researched and learned. The kids have enjoyed this unit so far!

Third grade is looking forward to a great December filled with fun winter activities, our class holiday party, and lots of learning!

Fourth Grade:

The month of November came and went before we knew it, and even Hurricane Sandy could not slow us down. We would like to thank Mrs. Moreno for coordinating the field trip to the Adventure Aquarium. The field trip helped us tie our Ecosystem Unit to different habitats and everyone had a great time.

Our new science unit is Food Chemistry. While working within this unit we will learn about starches, glucose, fats, and proteins. We will investigate how a balanced diet helps our bodies develop and grow- strong and healthy.

We had a wonderful time when the Alleghany River Dancers visited us and demonstrated some traditional Native American dances. They also told us the important meanings to these dances. We would like to thank the PTO and the Cultural Arts Committee for bringing the Alleghany River Dancers to our school.

The fourth grade hallway is filled with wonderful writing projects and the group presentation posters about the early European Colonies in North America. You will see turkeys in disguise, cornucopias and leaves hanging from the ceiling in the hallway.

The final thank you is to Mr. Nation and Ms. Fassnacht for the wonderful Winter Concert where students performed for their classmates and parents.

Special & Support Area Updates

Art

Kindergarten classes are learning about drawing lines and the art of Joan Miro. After making fun drawings of people and animals, we made clay figures based on the painting *People and Dog in the Sun*.

First grade focused on the work of Claude Monet and his Japanese bridge paintings. By folding our paper as we were painting, we were able to get a reflection of our garden through the process of mono printing. The next class we added details with oil pastels as we watched the movie, *Linnea in Monet's Garden*.

Second grade classes finished their clay dinosaur by painting with glaze. We also traveled back in time to look at the cave walls of Lascaux and went on a virtual tour using a website from the famous French cave. We took our paper which we crumbled and painted to look like a cave wall and drew with oil pastels under our tables to have a sense of a cave atmosphere.

Third grade classes finished their Modern Mona's with crayons and textures. We are learning more about Leonardo's inventions as we create our own flying machine model from paper. We have read books and watched short films to learn more about the great artist.

Fourth grade classes have been studying portraits by drawing first on paper, then transferring our image onto a Styrofoam plate. Using various colored inks, we created several prints which were then altered the following class through collage and coloring. We were inspired by the portrait prints of Andy Warhol.

December Events

- 12/5 *Janet Wong Cultural Arts Presentation*
- 12/7 "Bucketfilling Day"
- 12/7 Kindergarten Gingerbread Workshop
- 12/14 Winter Staff Luncheon
- 12/20 Strings Presentation—David Kim
- 12/24 No School
- 12/25 No School
- 12/26 No School
- 12/27 No School
- 12/28 No School
- 12/31 No School

