

October 2013–Team Updates

Kindergarten:

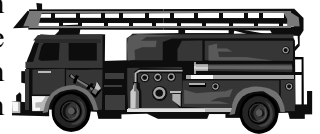
October was a verrry busy month in the kindergarten classrooms. We had a visit from Mother Goose who provided us with an interactive lesson that combined Mother Goose rhymes with the alphabet. She is very entertaining and educational at the same time. The children could hardly contain their laughter throughout her program. Thank you to the Cultural Arts Committee for providing us with that special program. We learned all about fire safety through our visit from the Berwyn Fire Company! We were reminded of how important it is for us to learn our address, remember to get out and stay out when there is a fire, and to have a meeting place outside once we are out of our houses. It was really fun to see all the cool tools on their truck!



In language arts we continued working on our letters and sight words. We began working on stretching and writing words. Science was exciting as we learned about different types of farms and about all the things we get from a farm. In math, we are making a pumpkin seed counting book that helps us learn about the 10 frame and counting to 10. We had fun visiting the Book Fair and making a wish list. We topped off the month with Scary Gym and our very fun Halloween parties!

First Grade:

October is so much fun when you are in first grade! We celebrated fire safety month with a visit from the Berwyn Fire Company. Firefighters came to our school to teach the children about fire safety. The children had the opportunity to see a fire truck and learn about the equipment on the truck. The teachers then continued the study of fire safety in the classroom. Each first grade student was able to pretend to be a firefighter with a paper made firefighter hat!



We also had a great field trip to Milky Way Farms. It was a beautiful day on the farm as the children learned about many farm animals. We learned all about a dairy farm and how it operates . . . we even saw a cow get milked by a robot. It was an awesome trip!

In reading groups, the children have been working on creating images as they read. This is the third reading strategy that the children have learned this year. All of the strategies help our readers better understand what they are reading, so please practice the strategies when you are reading at home.

In Science, we have been learning about the Solar System. The children enjoyed learning about the inner and outer planets as well as the moon and the sun. With each lesson, the children created a special project that coincides with what they have learned. Be on the lookout for our souvenir from the moon!

We completed our Social Studies unit on communities and maps. The children will soon prepare for our "trip" to Japan. While there, the children will learn all about the geographical location of Japan as well as the culture of Japanese people.

In Math, our first graders are busy learning different strategies for solving addition and subtraction problems. The children are getting very good at finding different ways to solve math problems. We encourage our first grade families to practice math facts at home...practice makes better!

We had tons of fun learning but the most anticipated events were connected to the end of October. The Book Fair, Scary Gym, Pumpkin Pals, Halloween parade, and classroom parties all added to our fabulous month. The children had a fantastic time celebrating. Thank you for helping make our October memories Spooktacular!

Second Grade:

October has been a beautiful fall month in second grade! Students brainstormed fall words and using many of those words, wrote descriptive paragraphs. We have been reading Halloween stories followed with discussion of story elements and lessons on sequencing events. Our authors are now writing their own "Haunted House" stories in our writers' workshops. Another story second graders are composing, using the same skills, is a fantasy about a dinosaur who follows them during their day.



In math, students have been learning about regrouping in addition and subtraction. We will now begin teaching about bar models. Look for the "Letter to Families" sent home by your child's math teacher at the start of each new unit. That letter will let you know what concepts we will be working on during the upcoming chapter.

Students have been fascinated with our study of dinosaurs in social studies. Dinosaur time periods, fossils, and the work paleontologists do are some of the topics that have been covered. We have recently completed our first science unit, Balancing and Weighing. Students expanded their understanding of the relationship between balance and weight as they explored hands-on activities in balancing, comparing and weighing. One favorite activity was constructing a mobile. We read a biography of Alexander Calder, the artist who invented the mobile. Students learned how to record results of their experiments using bar graphs, line plots, tables, and Venn diagrams.

The days are flying by! Soon November will be here. Please send a jacket with your child each day. We go outside, even in the cold weather! We hope to see you during November conferences.

Third Grade:

October was a busy month for VFE third graders. Our students kicked off the month by taking the ERB tests. They worked very hard and we were proud of their effort during the week!



We then traveled to the John James Audubon Center on the 9th and 10th. Students learned about birds and John James Audubon and then got to see the grounds of the Audubon Center through bird watching. It was a fun trip for the kids and we were excited to kick off another year of our educational partnership with the Audubon Center.

Students continued their study of our science unit on Rocks and Minerals. All month third graders conducted field tests to learn more about our twelve mystery minerals. We wrapped up our unit by learning about our minerals' everyday uses. We will begin our next unit on Land and Water in November.

In social studies, we are finishing our maps and globes study and beginning our study of Native Americans. Each class will study a specific tribe and in December, we will have a Native American "Pow Wow" by traveling from classroom to classroom to hear about each specific tribe.

In reading, we continue our theme units through daily instruction and centers. Students are learning reading strategies that they practice each day independently and in whole group.

Lastly, October also brought the much anticipated "Scary Gym" and Halloween parade and parties! We look forward to another fun month filled with unique learning opportunities.



October has come and gone in a flash and we accomplished many things during this month. The hallways are filled with so many fall-themed writing assignments, falling leaves, and grinning pumpkins. You can tell that we were gearing up for our big Halloween Parade.

In science, we saw the first-hand effects of what agricultural runoff, acid rain, and road salt can physically do to an ecosystem. In Social Studies, we are currently learning about the early French, Dutch, English, and Spanish colonies that came to North America for more freedoms or to find the streets paved in gold.

We want to say thank you to all the parent volunteers who helped make the Book Fair a smashing success for all the students and staff. Another huge thank you goes out to all the volunteers who helped make the Scary Gym an outstanding time for all the students. We ended the month with our traditional Halloween Parade and individual class parties and we would like to say thank you to all the homeroom parents for making the individual classroom parties a great success.



Special & Support Area Updates

Music



The music classroom at VFES this year is filled with singing, dancing, and playing instruments! We have been singing songs and learning dances from many different parts of the world. Through the performance of these songs and dances, we not only learn musical concepts but we also gain an appreciation for different cultures and learn to work together as a class. In addition, we have a lot of fun learning to play instruments such as the drums, the rhythms sticks, and the xylophones. The 3rd and 4th graders also have the opportunity to play the recorder!

Our 4th grade band students are making tremendous progress as they learn their very first notes and songs on their new instruments. Our 3rd and 4th grade chorus is also working very hard to prepare for the Winter Concert on December 18th! They are eager and excited to perform for their family, friends, and teachers!

