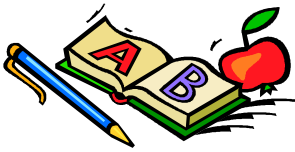




VFES MONTHLY REPORT

September 2013–Team Updates

Kindergarten:



It's always so exciting and bit scary for our kindergarten students at the beginning of the year. We are well on our way to learning the daily routines. We learned how to write the date on our calendar each day, how to unpack our backpacks and keep track of our mail. We enjoyed our first assembly performed by Quiet Riot, had our health screenings, celebrated Constitution Day and Peace Day all in our second week of school. Wow! Each class developed their own set of rules for the classroom and turned them into a classroom constitution which each member signed - just like the U.S. Constitution. We began our study of the alphabet and celebrated Johnny Appleseed's birthday with some fun apple activities. We visited the Science room and learned about "thinking like a scientist". In Math we got to explore flat shapes and solid shapes. We have made some great new friends and are looking forward to a great year.

First Grade:

Welcome back! The first grade teachers are excited to share this amazing year of learning with you! September was a busy month! The children have adjusted to a full day and are enjoying their time as first graders. Our theme for September was apples. All the first graders celebrated Johnny Appleseed's birthday on September 26th with various apple activities throughout the day . . . it was juicy and sweet!



Reading groups have started and the children are getting used to our Language Arts schedule. In large group reading, the children are learning about making personal connections to literature. The children then have the opportunity to practice that skill during small group reading. In writing, the first grade teachers have been reviewing the proper pencil grip and correct letter formation as we work our way through the alphabet studying letters and sounds.

In Math, the children just completed a unit on number bonds. The children enjoyed working with manipulatives to develop a deep understanding of how numbers can be split into two parts. Comparing and measuring was our focus for Science this month. The children learned to compare, work with standard and nonstandard units of measurement, and measure with a ruler and balance scales. Our next Science unit will take us on a trip to Outer Space!

In Social Studies, the children are studying maps and communities. While learning about their place in our world, our first graders are also learning how to read maps. This understanding will continue to develop throughout the year as we "travel" to different parts of our world.

We all very excited about our upcoming field trip to Milky Way Farm on October 3rd. This field trip will connect to our theme for October . . . pumpkins! Happy Fall!

Second Grade:

Welcome to our second graders and their families! We enjoyed meeting and speaking with many of you during our curriculum night on September 19th. We hope you had the chance to find your child's "Who Am I?" riddle hanging near their classroom. This was the first of many writing pieces students will compose this year using each step of the writing process. Our budding writers also wrote Acrostic Name poems to decorate their classroom. The month was filled with getting-to-know-you activities such as Friend Scavenger Hunts and sharing an item that was special to or told something about the student. The objects had to fit inside a paper bag. We had fun guessing what was inside the bag after listening to clues provided by the student.

Science classes have begun with the study of balancing and weighing and everyone seems to be enjoying learning about dinosaurs in social studies. In math, we are working on place value, including adding numbers to 1,000 with and without regrouping.

We were treated to an entertaining and educational program inspiring all of us to be respectful Valley Forge community members. Ask your child about LISA: Listen, Include, Share, Accept. Thank you to our PTO for helping us get off to a positive start! Second graders participated in our school-wide Peace Day. After reading a book describing what peace means to different people and watching a video featuring students and staff members telling what peace means, students wrote what peace is to them. The sentences were written on links of paper. Each Valley Forge student's link were put together by our guidance counselor, Mrs. Swetkowski to form a long chain. The second teachers are looking forward to a fantastic year, filled with many more opportunities for learning. Have a happy fall!



Third Grade:



September has been a great start for our 2013-2014 third graders! The teachers and students have been working hard at learning the classroom routines, time changes in schedules, and meeting one another.

We have kicked off our curriculum with our Reading One theme: "Community". Throughout this theme, students have been learning new vocabulary, working on spelling patterns, making connections to text, and writing about personal connections.

In social studies we have started our maps and globes unit. Students are learning how to read and create maps and about the geography of our world.

In science we have started our units on rocks and minerals. Students classify rocks and minerals based on their distinctive properties. The children do field tests to learn more about each mineral and then use that information to decide what their mystery minerals actually are. The kids have been working extremely hard and have been enjoying this unit.

Third grade teachers are excited to have this year underway and we look forward to providing a positive and memorable experience for your children.

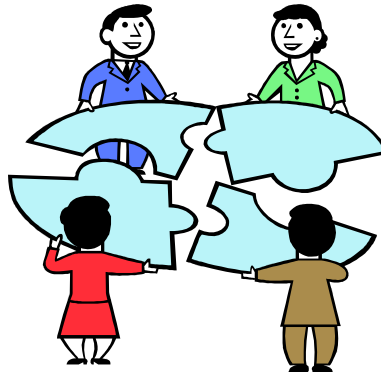
The Fourth Grade Students are off to a great start of the new school year! We have been working very hard during our first month of school. We spent the first couple of weeks learning about each other, the school rules, and our daily classroom routines.



The students are currently learning about the Five Themes of Geography in Social Studies and we will soon move onto studying about early European explorations and settlements in North America. We will be using computer classroom for our Global Studies lessons and the students are looking forward to "visiting" England, Spain, France, India, and Brazil during this school year.

In Science, we are excited about our Ecosystems unit. We have already created our own terrariums and aquariums and have just finished adding our living organisms to their new environments. We are most curious to see what happens when we begin to upset the natural balance of our ecosystems with certain types of pollutants! (Please do not worry we will be taking the living creatures out of the ecosystems prior to polluting them.)

We would like to thank the PTO Cultural Arts Program for having Quiet Riot visiting us and giving us positive ways to deal with possible bullies. We also want to thank all the parents that were here for Curriculum Night and for making it the success it was. We are excited for all the great things we will learn throughout this school year and all the fun and exciting things we will experience.



“We are like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. We are all unique and have our own special place in the puzzle of the universe. Without each of us, the puzzle is incomplete.”

-Rod Williams, Musician

Special & Support Area Updates

Art

The art room is busy making artwork to display on the walls and brighten the school. We have taken time to review classroom procedures, meet new friends, and prepare our sketchbooks. An exciting addition this year, we have "traveling sketchbooks" that will collect the artwork from Kindergarten all the way to 12th grade. As a collaborative work among all of our district's art teachers, we have created beautiful books for all of our students to draw in and share together. The books will be with us for the first marking period, move to the middle school the next, and then onto the high school. They will circulate back around for all of our students to enjoy. Looking forward to a creative new year!

Mrs. McQuate and Mrs. Braun

